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LEST I FORGET

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A "HIDDEN-CHILD" HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR

by

Fred Greenwood

INTRODUCTION

Over the years many people have asked me to write about my experiences during my life. I have waited too long. Memories fade over the years and I know that I have forgotten many events and nearly all the names. Even the sequence of events has slipped my mind. So, I sit here and dig deep inside my subconscious in the hope that I will be able to recall at least some of my youth and the major events of the rest of my life. I intend not to exaggerate or invent anything but to record things as I remember them now.

This book is written mostly for my children and my children's children. I have never discussed my life during the war years with them but they should know. I was always reluctant to talk about it. I never really considered myself a Holocaust survivor and I still resist that term because I, thank G'd, never ended up in a concentration camp. I do not like to be categorized, so I even dislike the term "Hidden Child" even though that describes precisely what I was during the Holocaust period.

I dedicate this book to my mother, Judith Groenewoudt, who suffered so much and worked so hard to make my later teen years as "normal" as was possible under the circumstances, and to Uncle Michael van Lieshout, the man who saved my life and that of my mother and one of my brothers.

I apologize for any mistakes or omissions which may occur in this book. These definitely are not intentional and can only be blamed on the passing years and a busy life. I decided not to use a ghost writer but to describe these episodes in my own words and as I remember them.

I want everybody to know that, except for the war years, the death of my father at a young age and the tragic sickness and death of Anita, my wife of nearly 40 years, I have had a wonderful and exciting life with much good fortune and with many reasons to be extremely appreciative and grateful. So, when you feel sad while reading these three periods of my life, keep in mind that, over all, my life has been full of positive accomplishments and events and that this book should be read with this in mind and in a good and positive spirit.

To simplify matters I decided to call Naftali by his birth-name "Mark" up to the time when he went to Israel and changed his name to Naftali.

Finally, to the Holocaust deniers I can only say that I wish that they were right. More than

ninety percent of my extended family and circle of acquaintances disappeared between 1940 and 1945 and I cannot find another explanation for that. That is my answer to them. Other than that I feel that they are missing a great lesson of history and they are the poorer for it.

CHAPTER 1: THE EARLY YEARS
CHAPTER 2: 1940-1942
CHAPTER 3: MY YEARS IN HIDING
CHAPTER 4: REUNION AND RECOVERY
CHAPTER 5: MY FIRST ADULT YEARS
CHAPTER 6: MY LIFE IN THE NEW WORLD
CHAPTER 7: MY FIRST CAREER IN THE NEW WORLD
CHAPTER 8: ~~THE KOREAN EXPERIENCE~~ IN TRANSIT
CHAPTER 9: MY ADVENTURES IN KOREA
CHAPTER 10: RETURN TO CIVILIAN LIFE
CHAPTER 11: THE START OF A NEW CAREER
CHAPTER 12: STARTING OUR OWN BUSINESS
CHAPTER 13: OUR BIG MOVE TO PHOENIX
CHAPTER 14: MY CAREER AS A SUCCESSFUL HAIR STYLIST
CHAPTER 15: PUTTING OUR LIVES BACK TOGETHER
CHAPTER 16: TRAGEDY STRIKES
CHAPTER 17: ENJOYING OUR RETIREMENT
CHAPTER 18: MY LIFE AS A WIDOWER AND THE HEALING PROCESS
CHAPTER 19: A NEW LIFE
EPILOGUE

CHAPTER 1: THE EARLY YEARS

I was born in Eindhoven, the Netherlands, on February 14, 1930. We had a wonderful family, my father, my mother, my oldest brother, Hans and my other brother, Jacques. My father, Andre Hartog Groenewoudt, who was a friendly and outgoing person and who knew just about everybody in what was then a small town, told the clerk at the registry "Freddy" when asked what the name of the newborn baby would be. And so it remained my official name until I changed it to "Fred" in the American Army, when I became a naturalized US citizen some twenty three years later. My middle name is Samson and my surname was Groenewoudt till I changed it, at the same time as my first name, into Greenwood.

My father Andre Hartog Groenewoudt, in Eindhoven, sometime in the1930's..

My Father was a "Vee-handelaar," a kind of wholesaler in meat. He would go out to the ranchers, buy a cow, take it to an abattoir (slaughterhouse), and then take orders from the butchers. I do not know whether he actually brought the ordered meat to the butchers, but I clearly remember going with him to the butchers to collect money for his sales, while sitting on the back seat of his bike. That was for me one of the highlights of my young life. The butchers really liked me and would give me samples of their home-made sausages. They would give me thick slices of liverwurst because that was my favorite.

My mother was a wonderful woman, patient, caring and loving. Friends talked to her about their problems and always left feeling better. I do not know whether she gave advice or was a good listener. Maybe both. She had some philosophical sayings. For example, if somebody would say: "How can such a person (not so good-looking or poor) ever find a spouse?" she would say "There is a lid for every pot." Her favorite was a short Dutch saying: "A man vreest het meest het onheil dat hij vreest and daarvoor heeft hij meer te vrezen dan G'd te vrezen geeft." In a free English translation it means: "Man fears the most a disaster he fears will come and therefore does he fear more than G'd gives him to fear."

Mother, or Grandma Julie, as the children got to know her, was an excellent pianist. When she was young she used to play background music for the silent movies in the theaters. She also used to compose some light, lyric music to which she regularly added new tunes. She seemed to have remembered these melodies throughout her life because she always played them but never wrote the music down.

She was an avid "whist" player. I think it is something like bridge. She had a regular day for her game. Three ladies came and for the rest of the afternoon she was busy playing and gossiping. The ladies liked me and they always had a friendly word for me. I knew them only as "tante (aunt) such" or "tante so" and, until I found out much later, I thought they were all relatives. Only later did I find out that some of these were related and some were not. Most were murdered in concentration camps during WW II.

My Mother, Grandma Julie., Dec. 1955

She was an excellent pianist. She gave piano lessons and we often had soirees in the evenings, which were held in the "Salon." We had two living areas downstairs in our house. One was used for everyday activities; the other, closed off by double sliding doors, was for special occasions. A soiree was such an occasion. The doors were opened for the guests who were seated in the beautiful room with purple velvet drapes and purple and dark green wall paper and Louis XIV chairs with purple velvet seats. All kinds of musicians came to form trios, quartets or quintets, with piano, one or more violins, sometimes a cello and often one or more singers. They played music until late in the evening. I remember listening to it from my bed until I fell asleep. When I grew a little older I was allowed to stay up. Nobody said a word during the performances. The only refreshment served during a break was tea and peanuts mixed with raisins, always the same.

I had two older brothers. My oldest brother, Hans, (Hartog Andre Groenewoudt) was a studious person. He was five years older than I, a typical "older brother," a responsibility he took seriously. He did not play with me very often but he spent time reading to me and explaining things to me. He often helped me with my homework.

From left: my brothers Jacques, Hans, me and my mother. Circa 1937.

The middle one was Jacques, good looking, happy-go-lucky, tall and blond. He was two years my elder. He spent time playing with me and he was a big tease. But he did it without being mean.

My grandmother, Kitty Swaab, born in Amsterdam, lived in our house until 1939 when she moved to a nursing home in Amsterdam. I remember her only as a kind, white-haired small woman who often took me for a walk. Then we would sit on a bench in the park where she told me stories or read a book to me.

"Oma" Kitty Swaab, my mother's mother, circa.1935. Killed during Holocaust.

My Grandfather, Hartog Andre Groenewoudt (my oldest brother was named after him), was a widower and lived in a small house on the Singel, a street in the center of town. He had a live-in housekeeper. Being a devout Jew, he always had a "Kipah" (head covering) on . He had a seat on one of the front benches in our synagogue which meant that he must have been important in the Jewish community. I was always proud to sit next to him as a child and I often received the honor of wrapping the wrapper around the Torah scroll on Saturday morning or holding the winecup for our Cantor, Mr. Frank, during the Friday night sanctification of the Sabbath. I felt rather important myself! We visited my Grandfather and his housekeeper frequently, especially during the holidays and almost every Shabbath afternoon. The children would be playing in the front room under the stern eye of the housekeeper, while in the back room the other adults talked over a cup of tea. I remember these visits fondly.

5

Other family members were several Uncles and Aunts on my mother's side, the Klerks, Moses and Jeanette Klerk and their son Naat. They had a little grocery store on the "Kleine Gracht Straat." Needless to say, I got candy from them whenever we visited. And then there were the Andriessens, a large family, more distantly related to my mother.

Grandma Groenewoudt, from Eindhoven. She died before I was born.

At that time Eindhoven was a small town, even by Dutch standards. The streets were narrow and it was not uncommon to find cobblestone streets. At night a man on a bycicle lit the gas lamps with a long stick. It was not until after WW II that the last of the gaslights were replaced by electric lights.

Even though small, my hometown had some important industries, the most prominent of which were the "Philips Gloeilampen Fabrieken, NV," better known worldwide as "Norelco." There were also a few cigar factories (I only remember the one named "Karel I"), shoe factories (Bata), cloth manufacturers and a small airport.

The earliest memories I have go back to pre-school days. I remember getting up very early in the morning, especially during the summer and sitting on the step outside the front door before anybody woke up. Little by little the town would come to life. The earliest were the delivery men; the milkman, the first to come, delivered the milk and other dairy products on a horse and wagon loaded with milk cans he had picked up from the dairy farms. My mother must have given him an order earlier because he poured milk from a large milk can, measured with a pewter liter measuring cup and poured a certain amount in a pan that was waiting for him. After some friendly words to me he returned to his wagon and klipperde-klopped down the quiet, sunlit street. Next was the breadman. He had a tricycle which looked like a small delivery truck. He rolled one side open and took some bread and rolls out and put these in a basket next to the milk. The egg-man came on a bicycle with a large basket on a back-rack. Finally the grocery man arrived. He had a large flat wagon pulled by an enormous Belgium work horse. It was one of these beautiful and powerful horses with a long-haired mane and hoofs as large as dinner plates. He brought potatoes and vegetables and also sold some pots and pans, dishes, etc.

I was about three years old when I had my first "girlfriend." I knew a girl in the neighborhood with whom I used to walk near the house. We often played together. One late afternoon we saw a little kitten. We tried to play with it but it ran away. We followed it around and under bushes and we totally forgot the time. It was already dark for a long time and we still were trying to catch that kitten. We finally did and I carried it triumphantly home. In the meantime my worried parents had called the police who were looking for us. Needless to say, I received due punishment and was sent to my room without dinner. The next morning I asked my father where that pretty kitten was. He said that it had run away, but I still think that he took it to the animal-pound.

Overall, I have only the most pleasant memories of those early days. We had a nice house on the Tongelrese Straat, an old neighborhood. I suppose that we belonged to what today one calls the "middle class" merchants. Our house was larger than the houses across the street. Those were the "workers" houses. A young lady from one of those houses was our "nanny" and her mother did our laundry. Often I would go there to "help." They had a large laundry tub with a beam that had to be pushed back and forth to agitate the water. I liked to help with that and I am sure that the lady did not mind it at all. Afterwards the sheets were pushed through a hand wringer which I helped to turn and then with some bleach they were left to dry outside on the small lawn at the back of the house.

Me, listening to a street musician, age 4, 1934.

Across from our house was a road which led to the lumberyard of the Baron van Hardenbroek. I often went there to watch all the activities. On one summer night the place burnt down. It was quite a sight and it looked to me as if the whole town had turned out to watch the firemen trying to control the fire. It burnt for hours and there was not much left of the buildings when it finally was under control. I remember the smell of the burnt wood which lasted for weeks. The son of the Baron van Hardenbroek family was a friend of ours and years later, after the war, I was a guest at their estate near Apeldoorn, a forested area in the central-eastern part of Holland.

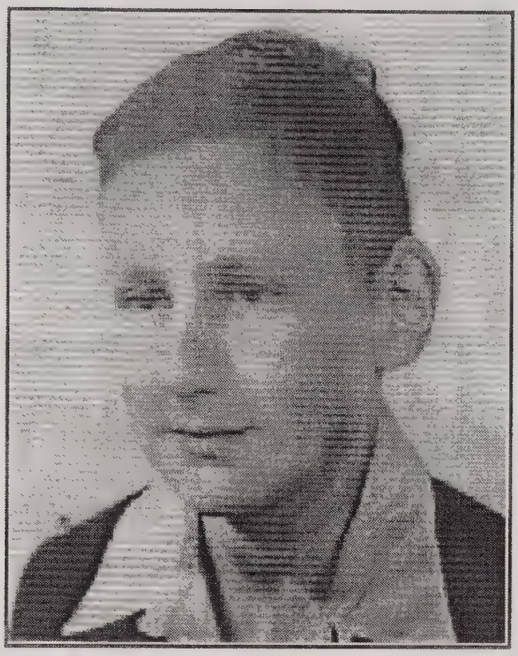
During the summers I had to spend most of the days inside, in a room with dark drapes drawn. I was born with a serious case of hayfever, a condition which tended to make me very ill especially in the early spring and the summer months. Somehow I kept myself occupied. I do not remember ever complaining about this restriction, severe for a young child. Maybe this was a good preparation for my later years which I had to spend indoors while hiding from the Nazis during WW II. All through my life things happened to me that prepared me for future events. It seemed that my whole life was filled with periods of minor hardships, at least these seemed minor to me, to help me later during future difficulties. And so, looking back, my entire life was a series of ups and downs, one running smoothly into

the other.

As children we had two favorite activities which kept us busy in our free time. One was watching the horse smithy, just a few houses from ours. His shop was closed by two large green wooden Dutch doors which he opened when he had to shod shoes on a horse. First he rolled an enormous hitch outside onto the sidewalk . He hitched the horse onto this contraption. My favorite horse was the Belgian work horse, an animal that towered meters above me. The smithy really knew how to handle these large animals. He made his own horse shoes. We loved to watch him as he put the iron into the fire, holding it by long tongues. It turned a bright orange and red as he pumped the bellows to get a hot fire. Then he shaped it. It seemed to me that the horseshoe was still burning hot when he, standing with his back to the horse, put the horse's leg between his legs and placed this shoe against the horse's foot. You could hear the flesh sizzling and it smelled awful. Then he drove nails through the shoe into the horse's foot. It did not seem to bother the horse at all. After removing another one of the horse's shoes he would repeat this procedure until all four legs were taken care of and the horse was led away with his new shiny horseshoes.

The other activity I liked was our almost daily visits to a grocery store next to our house. Please, do not picture that as one of today's supermarkets. This store was located in the front room of a house no larger than ours. The lady storekeeper already knew why we had come and she always had a supply of empty pudding or small cereal boxes ready. We took these home and either played grocery store or built houses with these. She also gave us small pointed paper bags with a little "zwart and wit," a powder mix of licorice and salt in which we dipped a wet finger which we then licked off. Mmmmm! Delicious!

Another pleasant memory I have of this period is that of a cafe, located directly across our house. In those days the cafes were family affairs and did not resemble today's bars. We occasionally spent time there in the afternoon (never at night) and were treated to a glass of limonade or "sinasappel sap," orange juice. But, what especially stands out in my memory, are the parties they regularly had, sometimes for a holiday or for a wedding or other personal celebration. Then the lady-owner sang all kinds of funny songs and everybody would laugh and participate. We were never part of those happenings which would last until deep into the night but my bedroom faced the cafe and we would sit on the windowsill of my bedroom and listen to all the excitement. It sounded all so happy and I do not ever remember any fights or drunken behavior during those evenings.



Around. age nine (1939).

In 1939, I was nine years old, we moved to a better neighborhood and to a larger house with a lovely, large garden in the back and a small one in the front. I had no problem leaving the old neighborhood, because I did not have many friends there. Somehow I objected to leaving my old school, why, I do not remember, so my parents bought me a scooter, one that you had to push forward with one foot. It was hard work but I got used to it. One morning it was raining cats and dogs. As usual, I went through the beautiful "Dommelpark." I saw what seemed to be a puddle in front of me; however, when I rode through it I was up to my waist in the water. I continued to school and sat all day in my drenched clothes. Needless to say, I ended up with a serious case of pneumonia. In those days there was little or no help for that. I was completely unconscious for two weeks. My parents thought that they would lose me but I woke up and a week later on my 10th birthday (February 14, 1940) I was allowed, for the first time in three weeks, to get up and out of bed. I can still remember clearly how surprised I was that I could not stand unaided and that I could only walk the short distance from my bedroom to the living room with the support of my mother. For weeks later I had a special diet to regain my strength. Needless to say, I had to change to a nearby school after that. It really was a much nicer school but I never had a chance to make friends there because ...

Next -> CHAPTER 2: 1940-1942

Return to INDEX

CHAPTER 2: 1940-1942

In one day our lives changed. From an almost idyllic life our world suddenly became one of fear and uncertainty. Some months before the war broke out we heard news about Hitler and what he was doing to countries in Eastern Europe but it seemed so far away. We had also heard about some of the horrible things he did to the Jews in Germany, about "Krystal Nacht" when so many synagogues were destroyed, store windows smashed and Jews beaten up and murdered. It was so far removed from us. We heard horror stories from German and Austrian Jewish refugees. We thought that these were exaggerated; we were in a state of denial. There was news of soldiers being called up into the armed forces and we saw war planes overhead, some strange looking ones. We debated whether these were "ours" or "theirs." We also heard the tirades of Hitler and he frightened us. We could not understand all he was saying but the way he was shouting and gesturing, and the rhythmic applause from the audience scared us! And that word "Juden!", over and over we heard that. That was frightening.

Then, on May 10th 1940, it happened. Early in the morning we heard the screaming sound of the dive bombers. They were not attacking our city but they scared the living daylight out of us. We had never heard such a sound. They dived down low over the city and then they disappeared. Later we heard that they leveled Rotterdam, the great harbor city on the North Sea and that they threatened to level more cities if the Queen would not capitulate. Poor little Holland with its unprofessional army could not stop the German war machine for long. On May 15th Holland capitulated. The royal house escaped to England and we were waiting with great trepidation and uncertainty. We did not have to wait long.

Early the next morning the German Army marched through our home town. Later we realized that in order to go into the rest of Holland they did not have to go through our street but this was also a propaganda war. What a show! We were huddled behind drawn curtains, just peaking through a little space. I will never forget not only the sight of this powerful, disciplined army, but even more so the sound which would reverberate through my brain for many years. First came a long beautiful car with the commanding officer standing proudly looking down on the onlookers in the street. Then the motorcycles followed, most with sidecars, with a tremendous roar. And they revved up the engines in order to make the sound even louder so that the houses seemed to shudder in fear, as we did. And then, the worst noise: thousands of marching soldiers, in perfect formations, led by an officer on horseback; each soldier had metal taps on his heels. You could hear them coming from far away even outdoing the sound of the disappearing motorcycles. And then the singing! Loud and in perfect unison, the German songs, a sound that still rings in my ears. My heart is racing right now, just trying to put words to one of the most horrific experiences in my life. I was then ten years old .....

That evening my parents called their friends. I could feel the tension. After a while a few came over. Strangely, instead of ringing the bell, they knocked on the door three times. After they came in there was a hushed discussion. Then my mother said:" We are staying

with Tante Sara tonight, so get a few things and let us go." Aunt Sara lived just down the street, not far. For the first time I was afraid to walk outside even though the whole family was together, but soon we entered Aunt Sara's house. There was a lot of talking going on most of which I did not understand. But I knew that this was a serious and dangerous situation. Eventually we were all assigned a place to sleep. I was the youngest and smallest so I was chosen to sleep on the floor between the living room hearth and the wall. Somehow I managed to sleep. Later in my life I often volunteered to sleep on the floor rather than sharing a bed with someone.

The next morning we returned to our own house. I had the strangest sensation that morning, walking home on that familiar street. I felt as if people were staring at us. Maybe they were. It was an uneasy feeling and I was glad when our door was closed behind us.

From left to right: My oldest brother, Hans, my mother, Austrian refuge and German refuge, both staying with us, 1942

We settled down into some kind of normal routine, but not for long. After a few months we were told to take two refugees into our house, one a clean-looking student from Germany, the other a casually dressed actor from Austria, a wonderful reader of short stories. He often entertained us during those difficult times. Jacques and I had to give up our rooms and move in with my oldest brother Hans in his room.

Again we adjusted, and again we were not allowed to settle down for long. At the end of 1940 my father became seriously ill. Later I found out that he had cancer. For the next six months he was in and out of the hospital several times. It was very difficult for all of us but especially for my mother. I can hardly imagine what she went through in those days. My father was well aware of the situation. Once, when somebody tried to cheer him up by telling him that he would be all right he said: "I don't know about men but I know cows and if a cow has these symptoms she will not survive."

symptoms she will not survive.

March

On ~~May~~ 12, 1941 my father died after an extended fight with cancer. I was eleven years old and matured fast. I cannot recall how I was told about my father's death. Somehow I knew. I do remember very clearly the day of the funeral, a dismal rainy day. I can see myself walking with my grandfather and brothers directly behind the horse-drawn black-draped wagon. We made several stops and many people joined our cortege. I can still see the long procession entering the Jewish cemetery, immediately turning to the right, then at the wall to the left until the middle of the cemetery where we turned left again. Forty years later I had no trouble finding the grave even though the cemetery was now completely neglected and my father's grave was unmarked. I just followed the way I had walked forty years earlier as an eleven- year- old distraught child.

I remember a constant stream of visitors paying their condolence calls to my mother. Two visitors stand out sharply in my mind; one was our Hassan (cantor) and spiritual leader, Mr. Frank, the other a Capuciner monk, his hood over his head, so we could barely see his face. It bothered me that both these religious leaders were making my mother laugh while talking about funny incidents in my father's life. Later I learned that this is a custom in our religion. We want to remember the good times we had. After the war Mother told me that this monk had been a great support to her and had helped her through some of the most difficult times. He visited her even after the Nazis did not allow Christians to have contact with the Jews. I still miss my father. Hardly a day passes when I do not think of him.

I remember sitting "Shivah," the seven days of mourning, when we were sitting on pillows on the floor whenever we had visitors. I remember going to the Synagogue every day with my older brothers to say Kaddish with our grandfather, a prayer said for the death of a close relative and which speaks of the affirmation of life.

Again we tried to have some normalcy in our lives. In September 1941 Hans graduated from the Gymnasium, a school which prepares one for a college education. However, he had to become our breadwinner, and so he went to work at the Philips Fabrieken, the major employer in Eindhoven. At the same time, the "normal" life started to unravel. Time after time notices were posted on lamp posts and in parks putting restrictions on our every day life. First we were not allowed in parks or into the movie theater. Then we had to give up our bicycles. It was one thing after another. Each order was accompanied by threats of the severest nature. We lived in constant fear of what would happen next. It was a very unsettling time. Only Jews would visit us and only after letting us know by phone that they were on the way.

Then it happened: we were ordered to wear the "Star" on our clothing, a bright yellow patch with a black outline of the star of David and in the middle in thick large letters the word "Jood," the Dutch word for "Jew." And they made it hard on us, because they did not give enough stars for all the outer clothing for all the family members. Mother constantly had to remove one star from one item of clothing to sew it onto another. We felt so humiliated when we walked in the streets. We would rather stay home but we had things to do. Some

people came over to me and told me to wear the star with pride. That was not an easy thing to do for a child.

Then we were notified that Jewish children were not allowed to go to our schools anymore. We had to go to a special Jewish school which was located in Den Bosch, some forty-five km North of Eindhoven. Every morning we had to take an early train so we could get to our school on time. There we sat with our yellow patches in the train. People were often staring at us but at no time were we teased or accosted by anybody. Late in the afternoon we took the train home. The school was not large and the classes crowded. But it was not very long before one by one students would not return and gradually the class became smaller and smaller. I do not remember what we studied or if we learned anything at all. Our minds were on other things.

In 1942 Jewish people we knew started to disappear. We heard that they had to go to work camps in Germany. It did not seem too bad except when children in our classrooms started to disappear. Did children have to go to a work camp, too? We were asked to volunteer to make duffelbags for our acquaintances who were called to go to the camps. I also helped. I remember that we were sitting in a large room, maybe in some kind of factory. Some were cutting the cloth and others were sewing. I had to make holes and put metal rings in the cloth. We were putting together duffelbags for the unfortunates who were "called up." We spent many hours doing that. The conversation usually was about someone who had to leave for the camp.

We asked relatives of the disappearing persons if they received any mail from them. We were so naive. Nobody heard anything personal. Some received a formal letter telling them that their relatives were doing well. We had an uneasy feeling that it was not quite true. Nobody received a telephone call and nobody ever came back. We heard about the horrible things which happened in Amsterdam where Jews were rounded up and taken to a concert hall overcrowded with families who were previously taken there. We were wondering about some family members we had in Amsterdam but a call assured us that everybody was still together but that many of their friends had already disappeared. It was obvious that it was only a matter of time before it was our turn.

This is a good time to introduce a good friend of our family, Mr. Michael van Lieshout or "Oom Michael," as we called him. He and his large family lived on a street behind ours. My mother gave some of his children piano lessons. They were devout Catholics and their large house was filled with the most exquisite religious artworks which Oom Michael proudly showed to friends and guests. He was a remarkable man, large and with a stiff left leg. I never knew wether it was an artificial leg or not. That leg was also a little shorter so you could detect a definite limp. This however did not slow him down at all. We all had trouble keeping up with him walking and when he was on his bike, which was especially made for him, he pedaled faster with his one good leg than we could with both of ours. He had a strong chin and he talked fast and with a dialect so I always had trouble understanding what he said.

CHAPTER 3: MY YEARS IN HIDING

During the summer of 1942 he was a frequent visitor. Mother and he would have quiet talks. Later we realized that they were making arrangements in case we were in threat of being picked up by the Germans. Some time in the fall of that year we were told by Mother to pack a little suitcase with things we might need in an emergency. And so I packed a little brown suitcase with some clothing and toilet articles and a few of my favorite books. By this time nearly every telephone call brought bad news and we always listened with great anxiety to the messages.

Some time in October, I believe it was the 11th of October, the phone rang. It was in the early evening. There was no doubt that there was great apprehension while my mother was talking. When she hung up she had tears in her eyes and told us to get our suitcases, that this was the time we would have to go into hiding, or "onderduiken" in Dutch.

How can one describe the emotions of a twelve year old boy when he has to leave the security of his home, say good-bye to his mother and brothers, not knowing whether we would ever see each other again. Within minutes Oom Michael came and told everyone what had to be done. I must have been in a daze because I have absolutely no recollection what he told me. But after hasty farewell kisses I left the house and climbed, for the first of many times, on the backseat of Oom Michael's bike with the little brown suitcase squeezed between me and the hulking back of the man who was risking his life and that of his family to save my life. It was already dark and I had no idea where I was going even though I knew our city very well. It seemed to take forever till we pulled up in front of a large two-story house. Soon the door opened and we were invited in. Then a routine followed that would be repeated many times during the following two years. First Oom Michael stressed upon me that I had to obey whatever my hosts would tell me, that I should be polite and behave properly at all times. Then a conversation took place which really shook me up: what I would have to do in case I was discovered and had to flee. The man of the house showed me my room upstairs and pointed at a window. I would have to climb out of that window, crawl over the roof, jump on a toolshed, then somehow over a fence into an alley and run as fast as I could without looking back. I would have to hide and take care of myself for a few days and then carefully try to contact Oom Michael. I was petrified! First of all, I had a great fear of heights. I do not think I could have done all that what was explained to me. Fortunately, I was never put to the test but I did not know it then.

And so, a new life started for me, without my family and mostly without anyone familiar and with a strange routine. First of all, I was told to remove my shoes so that neighbors would not hear footsteps when nobody else was home; also I could not flush a toilet unless people were home. During the day I was allowed to stay downstairs with the family but not at night when the lights were on , because in Holland it is customary to leave curtains and drapes open even when lights are on. Drawn drapes would cause neighbors to ask questions. That meant that I had to eat my supper upstairs in my room because it was dark early.

My first night there was awful. I was so nervous and I constantly listened for unusual sounds, which came along frequently in these strange surroundings. Somehow I did not cry. I seemed to have accepted my fate and made the best of my circumstances. The next morning I got better acquainted with my hostess {the man of the house had left early for work}. I do not remember what we talked about but we talked a lot. I was only twelve years old but I had matured fast. I remember that she had a large record collection which I played frequently, and of course very quietly, during my stay there.

One day followed the other. I adjusted to my new life very quickly but I was extremely lonely. I never seemed to meet the man of the house. Maybe I had to go upstairs before he arrived home from work. It would be that way for most of the next two years, so much so, that I started feeling uncomfortable talking to the men in the families where I stayed. And that feeling stayed with me for the rest of my life. Even today, I find it easier to talk to women than to men.

If I remember well, it was already during these first few weeks that I received an unexpected visitor, Ms. Tinbergen. I knew of her only by her reputation. My older brothers had mentioned her as a very tough German language teacher. To me she sounded friendly enough but later I found out that she was very strict. But now she was talking to me seriously about continuing my studies even though I was in hiding. She gave me some study and work books in different subjects and gave me assignments. I thought that she gave me too much work to do and when she came back a week later I had not nearly finished my assigned work. This time she was not nearly as nice! What was even worse, I received a stern letter from my beloved oldest brother, Hans, in which he lectured me about the importance of my continuing studies. He also made me aware of the fact that Ms. Tinbergen was literally risking her life in order to assist me with my education.

For the following two years Ms. Tinbergen would visit me every few weeks to check on my progress, give me new home work and bring me additional study and reading material. I am forever grateful to her. Even though I missed two and a half years of schooling, I was set back only one year when I returned to school after the war. As of this writing (September 1998) she is still alive and well, well up in her nineties. I always visit her during our frequent trips to Holland.

I became increasingly worried about my mother and my brothers. It was only after a long time, after many months, when Oom Michael finally told me some news about my mother and Jacques (Hans was still free at that time because he worked for Philips, a contractor for the German army). My mother was living in Den Haag with false identity papers, as a free person and under an assumed name. She was doing well. She lived with the family Koens consisting of an older father and mother and two daughters. One of the daughters, Ria Koens, was an opera singer and there was a piano in the house, so she was very pleased to be able to play the piano and coach Ria with her singing. I found out later that they all became very close friends. Jacques, my middle brother, also lived as a free person with false papers. He lived with a farmer in Limburg, in the south of Holland. According to Oom

Michael they were both completely safe. I was very much put at ease, although I felt a little unhappy that I was the only one in our family who was in hiding. From then on I heard from Oom Michael regularly how they were doing.

I want to interrupt the flow of my story to tell you about what happened to my oldest brother during this time. He worked for the "Philips Gloeilampen Fabrieken" and because this factory made things for the German army Jews working there were exempted from being hauled to the concentration camps, at least for a while. During that time he regularly wrote letters to me which Oom Michael brought me. He was a big brother and a father all at once. Unfortunately, half a year later he also had to go into hiding. It seemed that he had trouble staying indoors, so he had to be moved away. I do not know exactly what happened to him. Things I heard I do not want to accept or believe. I was told that, when he finally had to go underground he was taken to a family but that he was restless and after a while could not stay indoors. They tried a different place but

Hans Groenewoudt, my oldest brother.
Circa 1940. Killed during Holocaust

the same thing occurred. Finally, he became a danger to the people who tried to save his life. One night he was taken across the Belgian border with the intent of getting him to Southern France and from there into Switzerland and freedom. One story is that they got caught by the Germans and were shot on the spot. Another story is that the underground people themselves shot him because he was a danger to them. That does not matter and it does not alter the fact that he never returned. He disappeared without a trace, never to be heard from again. For me this was always one of the hardest things to accept about this whole miserable time. One night I had a nightmare. I was walking on a long bridge and far in the distance was my brother, Hans, walking towards me. Even though we kept walking towards each other we never got closer. I kept calling him and waving to him to come closer but it never happened. I woke up crying for the first time since I had left home. I am convinced that this was the night Hans died. How, I will never know. For years this dream would come back to haunt me. Even many years after the war, as an adult with a family and children, I often woke up at night reliving this nightmare and crying uncontrollably. Anita would ask me what was the matter but I never told anyone, not even Anita, about this horrible dream. Only much later, after the death of Anita, was I able to live with this memory without crying. The worst part of all this is the fact that there is no place marked where he died and no real date of death, only an officially created artificial date for all victims of the Holocaust whose date of death is unknown. I have made an adjustment to this after a great many years and learned to accept it.

In the course of the following two years I had fourteen different "addresses" or safe-houses where I would stay two or three weeks, never longer. To most of these families I only went once. I ended up circulating mostly between five families. Oom Michael would let me know ahead of time when he would pick me up. I prepared my little suitcase and early in the morning, usually just before day-break, Oom Michael would come with his bicycle, I would climb on the back and with his one good leg he would pedal fast to my next destination. This was always an anxious time for me. It was the only time I was allowed to leave the house and I could not wait to get to my new place. Freedom was not a pleasurable option for me at that time. Only once did we have a close call. Early in the morning while changing addresses a German soldier approached us on the country road where we were and we could not get away from him. It must have been in the late part of the year because it was just daybreak. Oom Michael told me that if we were to try to escape we certainly would be caught. So, he instructed me not to say a word even if the soldier were to address me. Fortunately he did not. The soldier and Oom Michael exchanged some words in German and we were on our way. I was shaking for many hours; I was petrified.

And so this was my routine: every two or three weeks I went to another place. I asked why this was necessary and he said that in this way nosy neighbors or deliverymen would not notice an extra person in the house. By staying in one place, sooner or later somebody might hear something unusual and think that there was a burglar in the house or someone might ask questions. I am constantly reminded of this when I hear about the fate of Anne Frank. She was my age, went into hiding approximately at the same time I did. She and her family were caught. People started to notice things after a while. You can be on the alert constantly only for so long. I am convinced that Oom Michael saved my life by taking the risk to move me to a different address every two or three weeks.

From all the different families who literally risked their lives to save mine I can only recollect two names: the Zwakenberg and the Zijlstra families. With these two families I spent most of the time in hiding and also some time after my liberation. They became like a substitute family for me. The Zwakenbergs were one of my first "addresses." They took me in as if I was a lost son. Mrs. Zwakenberg wanted me to call her "Moeder" (mother). I agreed reluctantly but, even though she was a wonderful woman and really treated me like a son, I never felt comfortable doing so. There was also an eighteen year old daughter in the house and even though she was six years my senior we got along beautifully. We had long conversations and she confided in me whenever she had problems with her boyfriends. I really was too young to understand it all but I must have been a good listener. Many a late evening we would sit by an open window, upstairs and out of sight, and had long talks. I almost felt normal. Mr. Zwakenberg often chided me whenever I did something wrong, very much like a father. I was happy that I returned to them more often than to any of the other places. I was in their house when I was liberated in the fall of 1944. I will describe that unforgettable day later.

The many days spent with this family were,

relatively speaking, the happiest days of my time in hiding. Even though I spent most of my time in my room on the second floor, I did have regular contact with one or more of the family members during the day and sometimes even during the evenings (they had a living room in the back of the house and out of sight of neighbors). Yet, most of the time I was alone in my room for so many days and so many hours. This was one of the most difficult things for me. Every morning I got up early with the family and I had breakfast with them. I must have had a need to do this, to have a more or less "normal" routine. But what was normal about it? For hours and days and weeks and months and years I was alone, trying to keep myself gainfully occupied. But how many hours can a boy in his early teens study or read? Sometimes I became so restless that I did not know whether to sit, to walk around the room or to peek from behind the curtains at the people in the outside world, going about their ways in a normal, free fashion. I vividly remember the days I spent looking down, from behind the curtains, at the rainy sidewalks, following with my eyes every person as far as I could. I longed to be able to step outside and to join them or to call out to them. Fortunately I had the presence of mind to control that dangerous urge. I felt no jealousy, just a feeling of longing. The seasons passed in an orderly fashion. It made little difference to me whether it was spring or summer or fall or winter. One followed the other and somehow the time passed. I was lonely but not extremely so, I was unhappy at times but not continuously. I must have made an adjustment. I accepted my fate. I was always happy when I went to another "address." It was a change for me and, for a short time at least, I was outdoors in the real world. It is difficult to put into words how I felt during the transfers. I was scared, yet exhilarated. I was thrilled to be out and yet I was relieved when I entered the safety of the new surroundings. I was uneasy during the first few days with an unknown family, yet I was often anxious to get away after a few weeks stay with one family, even with my favorite families. I guess I was a confused young man but I got through these

During the first year of hiding, Dec. 1942

difficult years.

During the years in hiding, with my new glasses. Circa 1943.

The second family I remember clearly is the Zijlstra family, Tante Paula and Oome Jan. They were a younger couple without children. The first time I stayed with them I felt ill at ease. They talked so easily with each other and I started to have problems communicating with people (even now, after so many years, I am not good at small talk). They had conversations about different subjects about which I knew little or nothing. They were intelligent people; he was an engineer at the Philips Factories. I just sat and listened to them. When they asked me about my family, I really did not know what to say. And the instructions I received there, as to what I had to do in case of an emergency, scared the devil out of me: jump out of my upstairs window onto a storage shed in their back yard, then drop into an ally, climb over a fense, somehow get through another alley to a street I did not know and then get away as fast as possible. Somehow, it was never clear to me where I would end up after all that. That was one of the many unknowns.

They were social people. They often had company and they would all sit for hours talking and laughing in the back yard while I was sitting quietly upstairs listening to all these goings on. Sometimes they would play records. I liked that. They loved classical music which I could hear and enjoy while hiding in my attic room. Occasionally I would try to peek outside and try to see some of the people without being seen myself. I only did that when it started getting dark but I was scared enough not to do it conspicuously. Luckily, nobody ever saw me. It was very hard to control the urge to sneak a peek once in a while. I fear that this urge cost my oldest brother, Hans, his life.

And so, days followed days; weeks, months and seasons went by and one year replaced the next. My routine did not change. I did my studies, did some reading, occasionally was able to play records, but most of the time was spent sitting up or lying on my bed, staring at the ceiling. It actually never occurred to me that I could be caught and end up in a concentration camp. I felt that, with patience, the time of my liberation would come. Only once did I think that I had to use my escape route to save my life. It was late at night when I heard a car stopping in front of the house where I was hiding. I heard voices speaking German and then the staccato of the metal heels of the German soldiers. They seemed to come directly to the house. I quickly got dressed (I always had my clothes ready on a chair next to my bed, a routine I still follow) and rehearsed in my mind the instructions I had received for my

escape. Luckily, I was more afraid of jumping off roofs and climbing over fences than I was of these soldiers. They just were dropping off a girl next to our house and left. What would have happened if I had tried to escape? I do not want to think about that. I do not remember any other time that I felt that my life was in immediate danger.

During the last year in hiding things became more exciting and lively for me. Almost every night we heard thousands of airplanes flying right over Eindhoven. For hours there was a constant drone, the sound of high flying aircraft on their way to bombing targets in Germany. We literally cheered them on. Often the Germans, who had a ring of anti-aircraft guns around Eindhoven, tried to catch a plane in their searchlights which were swaying back and forth through the night sky. If they were successful they quickly aimed a second and third searchlight at the plane and started a rapid series of gun fire at the aircraft. Occasionally they hit one and then the plane came screaming down in flames. Some fell very close to our house but from where I looked I could not see it hitting the ground. Those nights were very exciting for me, especially when I could share this time with the family where I was hiding.

When I stayed with the Zwakenberg family we regularly listened clandestinely to the BBC overseas news late at night. That was always very special. We listened to the speeches of Churchill and followed the progress of the allied armies in Africa and elsewhere. They also mentioned the bombing raids of the planes we had heard the night before and told about the results of the bombardment and the number of aircraft which were lost. Fortunately, the toll on the allied side was mostly very low.

One night we heard the thrilling news of the invasion at the Normandy beach. I was so lucky that it took place while I was staying with the Zwakenbergs because they followed the progress daily. Mr. Zwakenberg even found a map of Europe of which he made many copies to spread around to his friends. I volunteered to put different colors on the borders of individual countries and to mark where the armies were going. Eindhoven, which is located near the Belgian border is not very far from the Normandy beach if you go by car on today's super highways; but slugging it out with the stubborn Germans it took the armies quite a while to get into Belgium. We followed all their successes and failures daily. Once they crossed the Belgium-French border they could easily have reached Eindhoven in one day. But it took them quite a few weeks. One morning we could clearly hear the rumble of the guns and we expected to be liberated any moment. I was excited but I could not imagine what I would do with my freedom. As it was, the armies were held up at a river near the Belgium-Dutch border for more than two weeks. That was the most dangerous but also the most exhilarating time for me. We saw the German Army withdrawing through our streets. The Zwakenberg home was on the main North-South highway and I saw little groups of soldiers and sometimes an individual German soldier walking, carrying everything on his back or sometimes they loaded their gear on doors stolen from homes with little roller scates put under the door. What a difference from the noisy, proud German army which had marched so magnificently through my hometown only a little less than four and a half years earlier. The soldiers looked pitiful and I do not recall seeing one of their officers. There was

also some shortage of food; there was absolutely no meat, fish or chicken, fresh vegetables, salt or sugar. I was lucky because the Zwakenbergs lived at the edge of town. They knew a farmer down the road who supplied them with eggs and cheese and milk. Bread and potatoes were also available. And so we had a limited menu but we did not starve as happened later to the population in the north-western part of Holland where my mother resided.

One night during the last two weeks of the German occupation we had one of the many air raid alerts. The Zwakenbergs told me to follow them outside to an air raid shelter. I was more afraid to be caught as a Jew than I was of the bombs that now came raining down on Eindhoven. I certainly did not want to be caught now, so close to my liberation. But Mr. Zwakenberg convinced me that nobody would pay any attention to me under those circumstances. He gave me a large blanket which I wrapped around me and we crossed the highway and entered the grounds of a brick factory. The doors must have been unlocked because when we arrived at the main building many people were already huddled inside the enormous ovens normally used for baking bricks. And there we sat for several hours in the dark, the only light coming from a lantern somebody had brought. We listened silently to the explosions and the sirens of the ambulances and the anti-aircraft firing. It seemed like many hours before finally the "all clear" siren sounded and we went back into our house. I had my first small taste of freedom, at least for a few hours in a brick factory oven. It felt extremely strange. I did not feel comfortable at all. I asked the Zwakenbergs if I could go out again. Of course they told me to be patient and that they would tell me when I could. So, back into my room I went, but things would never be the same again. The smell of freedom was in the air. It was only a matter of time.

Then, finally, the day arrived, September 12th, 1944. Early in the morning we heard a distant and constant rumbling which gradually became louder. Then, suddenly, planes flew high over our part of the city, some pulling gliders, some were light planes protecting the formation. Soon the gliders were released and landed on a field behind our house. A few were shot down, but generally the defenses of the Germans were very weak. Parachutists dropped from some of the planes. It was an exiting time.

My adrenaline started to flow. When could I leave the house? "Not yet, not yet" was the answer. For the first time, after nearly two years in hiding, I was getting anxious. That night of the bombing had given me a little feeling of freedom and now the allies were close! "Not yet." During these early hours the rumbling grew gradually louder. We received the news: the rumbling was the sound of the approach of an enormous army of tanks and armored vehicles, our liberators! They were only a few miles south of Eindhoven! Not much later came the joyous news: it was safe for the hidden Jews to come out! I got permission from Mr. Zwakenberg to go outside. But now I was hesitant. What if things went bad and the Germans returned? I was re-assured that chances were practically nil. The Germans were defeated, they had retreated, except for some isolated small units, north of the rivers (about sixty km. North of Eindhoven) and I should now consider myself a free person. I was fourteen and a half years old. Finally free.

I stepped outside the house. I must have been quite a sight: I had just some old clothes, an old sweater with a hole in the sleeve, an amateur haircut (I had not seen a barber during all that time) and shoes in which I had not walked for nearly two years. I do not remember if these shoes were a proper fit. I only remember that I started walking towards the sound of the approaching army. It felt so strange walking outside in the street. I was in a daze, in a dream-like state. I did remember where to go: straight into town on the main highway. I walked fast, at least it felt as if I walked fast. Many people were walking in the same direction. I do not know whether anybody noticed or recognized me. Probably they were not paying any attention to me. Everyone was anxious to meet our liberators. I just kept walking in a daze toward that sound that now was very intense. I rounded a bend in the highway and there I saw the lead armored car. I do not know who was in that car, I just kept walking and walking for miles meeting all these tanks and hundreds of trucks and armored vehicles. How different was the behavior of this army from that of the German Army when it marched through our town some four and a half years earlier. These soldiers were sitting on top of the tanks, smiling and waving and offering chocolate bars and cigarettes. For a long time I did not approach any vehicle. It was all so enormous and overwhelming and the soldiers all looked so big and their faces so round. They were not underfed like we were. Finally I dared to approach an enormous tank where a soldier bent down and gave me a couple of chocolate bars. Then I walked on and on, for hours. I started realizing that I had walked very far and started thinking of returning but I wanted to see more of that army. Finally I sat down to rest for a while. I was exhausted and dehydrated and my feet were hurting. I took my shoes off. To my surprise and shock, my socks were soaked in blood. In the emotional state I was in I had not felt the blisters on my feet. I was not used to walking in shoes anymore. In this state of mind I had not noticed that the blisters had burst open and that I was now walking on raw flesh.

It never occurred to me to ask for help. There were thousands of people in the streets who could have helped me or I could have asked some soldier or ambulance which was part of the passing troops. I just sat there for a while. After I regained my strength I slowly walked back. You could not call it walking. I limped for a while, sat down for a while and then continued again. It took me many hours in awful pain until I finally arrived back at the Zwakenberg address. It was already getting dark. The Zwakenbergs had started to worry and were very relieved to see me. They told me to take a shower and especially to wash my feet thoroughly. Did that ever hurt! I could not stop the bleeding. "Moeder" put a strip of linen tightly around my feet tearing it off a sheet and, after eating and drinking something, sent me to bed. I could not sleep, no way. I was exhausted and in pain but I was also excited. And there was a lot of noise in the streets: people were celebrating their liberation, singing and dancing all through the night. For the first time in years the street lights were lit. I could also hear the sound of tanks and armored cars turning in front of our house: they were setting up a large military base on the grounds of the brick factory where we had found shelter during the bombing raid a few nights earlier.

Early the next morning I walked across the street to talk to these heroes. To me they all looked to be ten feet tall. They were sitting in their tents or on the tanks, cleaning their

weapons, washing and polishing. There was a lot of laughter and singing. I suddenly realized how little joy and laughter I had had for the past few years. It certainly sounded good to me. I could not understand the language they were speaking. The little English I had learned while in hiding was not enough to follow their conversations. They noticed my swollen feet and bloodied bandages and instantly I became their personal ward. The rest of the day I spent in their camp. They washed my feet, put a disinfectant on them and bandaged them properly. And they fed me all day long! I joined them when they ate, and between their meals they fed me chocolate, cookies and candy. I felt like a prince! And they enjoyed having me around. Maybe I reminded them of a younger brother or son. They spoiled me terribly and I let them. I was having a good time and I was free and could move about without fear for my life! Many years later, around 1996, I met a man who told me he had been in Holland in 1944-1945. When I told him that I came from Eindhoven he became all excited. He was stationed there and he recalled a young Jewish boy who had come out of hiding and who needed some medical help with his bleeding feet. I told him that I had been that young boy. Needless to say, we had some reminiscing to do.

The next morning, still uncomfortable and in pain, I hobbled to the highway where the Army was moving North to the rivers. It was moving slowly and once in a while it stopped for a short time. People around me explained to me that there were some squirmishes going on but that everything was all right. After a while this enormous column, which stretched for many miles from south of Eindhoven to many miles north of it, stopped in its tracks. We expected it to move on again but that did not happen. There was a hush over the area, quite different from the victorious noise of the previous day. I learned from people who understood English, that there was some problem at the head of the column. I tried to picture in my mind how there could be something far away that could stop this enormously powerful army, but I could not comprehend it. Later I found out that they were stopped on the bridge near Arnhem, about forty miles North of Eindhoven, a tragedy later described in the film "A Bridge to Cross"(?). From the middle of September 1944 until the middle of May 1945 they were stopped and remained stationed in our area.

A whole new life began for me now. I was free but I had no home. My mother was in hiding in Den Haag (The Hague) and would not be liberated until 1945. I did not know what to do with my newly found freedom. I had no friends my age. I still could not enter school right away. I had no proper clothing for going outside and I was very uncomfortable leaving the house. Except for the frequent visits to the soldiers in the camp across the street, my routine was not very different from what it had been while I was in hiding. Of course, I could now go if I pleased, I could wear shoes(!) but I mostly stayed in the house. Oom Michael arranged for me to stay with the Zwakenbergs part of the time and part of the time with the Zijlstra's. Ms. Tinbergen came more frequently now to prepare me for the day when I would return to school.

I was very thin and I did not look well. I have a picture showing what I looked like and it was not very good. Oom Michael

One year after I was liberated, August 1945.

decided that I needed some fresh air and good food and exercise, so one day he picked me up and someone took us in a truck to a farm in the North-East of Holland, in the province of Friesland. This was extremely dangerous because we had to go through areas still occupied by German soldiers. I think that the Nazis were in such disarray that they had no time to notice us. And so we arrived safely at this lovely old farmhouse far away from the busy city life I knew. The closest neighbor was another farmer a mile away. I spent three glorious weeks there helping with the hard work on the farm, the kind of life I was not accustomed to. It strengthened me and that was what Oom Michael had in mind. I did not talk much with the farmers. I had a terrible sense of inferiority and was not capable of having a normal conversation. But they were very understanding and gave me time to spend with a little calf in the field. It was a companion for me for many hours every day. But early in the morning I had to get out of bed, eat an enormous breakfast with pancakes, home made bread (I can still smell the aroma of the freshly baked bread) with eggs and bacon (not kosher!), full fat milk with the oat cereal. Then outside early, we walked through the dew-wet grass field to get to the cows. The farmer (I do not remember his name) tried to teach me how to milk a cow but I never managed to do it properly. The farmhouse was very old. It had a large kitchen where we ate our meals which were prepared on an enormous black iron wood-burning stove. There was always a large kettle for hot coffee ready. For lunch we had large slices of bread with ham or bloodwurst and for dinner fresh vegetables, lots of potatoes and pork or chicken. Outside it was very cold (it was probably October or

November) but inside it was toasty warm. The kitchen was separated from the cattle barn only by a Dutch door, one that was separated in the middle so that one could open the top half while the bottom half was still closed. You would think that this would make the house smelly but that was not the case. The barn was kept immaculately clean and the straw on the floor was changed frequently which gave a dull, sweet smell to the barn even though it was full of cattle. Outside the barn lay a large pig, fenced in a muddy area. Occasionally he made a lot of noise. Beyond that there was a dirt road leading to a country road and a fenced area for chickens and a colorful rooster who woke us up every morning at daybreak. After three weeks I went back to my home town looking a lot more fit.

One morning , I was home alone at the Zijlstra house. The doorbell rang. I opened the door and there stood my brother Jacques whom I had not seen for three years. I was totally speechless as if I was seeing an apparition. I was not in the habit of cursing but after a long silence I could only say: "G'dverdomme!", a terrible Dutch curse. And all he could say was: "That is a nice way to greet your brother after all this time!." We both started laughing and crying at the same time. I did not even have the presence of mind to invite him into the house until he said: "Won't you let me in?". After a while he told me how he had survived the war. For a year he had remained at a farm. He had had some problems with German soldiers, he was even arrested once for some underground work he had done, but they never suspected him of being Jewish. He did not look Jewish and that saved his life. After a while there were too many problems with the Germans. Oom Michael found him a place with a family in Utrecht, a university town in the center of Holland. There he stayed until he was liberated. That family was very active in the underground. They published an underground newspaper in which they brought people up to date about the progress of the allied army. They were communists and there was some communist propaganda mixed with the news. Jacques helped them distribute the paper which was extremely dangerous. He seemed to have enjoyed the excitement of that time but he also was relieved when he was liberated and relieved of all danger. I do not remember where he stayed while I was still with the Zijlstra family. He became re-united with the few surviving Jewish boys who were his age. I did not see him often after that.

After several months the surviving Jewish community felt that I should stay with a Jewish family and return gradually to a normal Jewish life. I moved in with a wonderful Jewish

family, Mijnheer and Mevrouw van Dam. They were an older, Orthodox couple. He said the traditional prayers every morning. They never tried to force me into religious practices but they sat an example and I am sure that, even though for many years I was not actively involved with Jewish religious life, they had a great influence on me. They spoke Yiddish, a mixture of German and Hebrew, with which I was unfamiliar, but I learned some expressions. They got a real kick out of it when I used these expressions, sometimes incorrectly. She was a very good cook and she managed to fatten me up in a short time.

This was an unnatural way of life but, looking back, I believe that it was an excellent transition time to get me used to living like "normal" people do. I still was ill at ease. I had little or no contact with peers and I had no way of keeping up with their conversation. I was not used to talking to people and especially not to teenagers my age. I felt extremely awkward. And I missed my mother and a normal family life more now then I had done during my years in hiding. Oom Michael often took me to his house which was full of young people, his children (he had nine) and their friends. They played games and sang songs I was unfamiliar with. They were happy and laughing and joking. I could not do that. I just listened and smiled. I wanted to learn to talk like they did but it never happened. And nobody seemed to make an effort to get me into a school.

Next -> CHAPTER 4: REUNION AND RECOVERY

Return to INDEX

CHAPTER 4: REUNION AND RECOVERY

Finally, in May 1945 the rest of Holland was liberated. It took some weeks until the news came that my mother would return to Eindhoven. I could not wait for that day to come. I was a nervous wreck when Oom Michael took my brother and me to the train station. I did not know what to expect. Would I recognize my mother? What would I say, what could I say? When she finally stepped off the train nobody could say a word, nobody said anything. We were all crying uncontrollably. My mother kept on feeling my face and after a long time said: "I don't recognize you. I can't believe that you are my little Freddy." She kept repeating that. I did not know what to say. I just stood there, all choked up. Of course, she could not recognize me. When we were separated, more than two and a half years earlier, I had been a chubby young boy with rosy cheeks. Now I was taller than she, I wore glasses, my face was still ashen and rather thin and with a five-o'clock shadow and I wore old disheveled, passed-down clothes which did not fit me too well. And I was a man! Not her little Freddy any more. Jacques was even taller but he had not changed that much. After a while we calmed down somewhat and we left the station with our arms around each other.

Again, my life changed completely. Somehow we had to get together and start our family life all over again, this time without the help of my oldest brother, Hans, whom we did not expect to ever see again. Only my mother continued to keep up some hope throughout her life, that somewhere, somehow, maybe from Russia or where-ever, Hans would return. Alas, this was not to be. I do not know from where my mother got her strength and courage but she always, through the most difficult times, remained upbeat and hopeful. She had not lost her sense of humor and she managed to be able to sing and laugh when the occasion was there. She had suffered enormously. She told us her story.

Separated from her family and staying with strangers, she never wavered in her belief that everything would end well. By chance, the apartment where she was living was across a court from the apartment where her brother, Oom Philip Swaab and his family lived. He was made aware of the fact that his sister was hiding in that apartment and once in a while they exchanged some furtive greetings. One day he motioned to her from his window that he and his family were to be taken away by the German soldiers. My mother could follow part of that scene. It must have been heart rendering. I have heard about hundreds of family members and acquaintances who were carted away never to return but I never actually saw it happening. She saw her own brother and his family taken away by the Nazis. I will never be able to fathom the emotions that occurred within her at that time. Needless to say, we never saw or heard from them again. She also suffered real starvation from September 1944, when I was liberated until May 1945 when she regained her freedom. She told us how she had walked along the railroad tracks in the hope of finding little scraps of wood or bits of coal to heat the house during the long, cold Dutch winter and how, in the spring, they went into the fields to look for tulip bulbs and dandelions to still the hunger pains they had. There was absolutely no food available to them. She believed that many of the people would have died if the war had lasted much longer.

But, there were also some very happy days for her. The family which had risked their lives to save my mother's life, the Koens, were a simple but wonderful and strictly religious, Catholic family. They adopted my mother as if she was one of their own. One of the daughters, Ria, who might have been my oldest brother's age, was an opera singer. Needless to say, Mother spent many happy hours coaching her and rehearsing arias with her. I am sure that the fact that there was a piano in the house, was a great comfort for Mother. Ria's younger sister, Dora, was a happy-go-lucky young lady who, I am sure, must have livened up the house often. I will tell you later more about these two sisters.

But now, this was all behind us. We had a family again, a truncated one but a family. However, we had nowhere to live. We had lost our house and everything else. We had absolutely nothing, no house, no furniture, no pots, pans, dishes, cutlery, only some rags for clothing and no money. Zero! Where to start? For a while I still had to stay with the Family van Dam. Then Ms. Tinbergen came to our aid. She had a friend and colleague, Mr. Bergman who was an artist. He had a garage converted into an art studio. We could stay there for as long as was necessary. I do not know whether it was rent-free or that somebody paid the rent but we stayed there for six months. Here is how we lived: it was a narrow room, about twenty feet long with only one small window which my mother covered with a piece of cloth somebody must have given her. On two crates we placed a borrowed bed-spring, without a mattress bottom, and a thin quilt on top. There is where I, already fifteen years old, slept with my mother. Jacques slept on the floor. Then we had an upright crate, which became our table and a couple of folding chairs. Jacques had to sit on another crate. There was a little sink with a small counter on which we placed an electric single burner. I do not remember a toilet or shower in that small garage so we probably used the facilities of Mr. Bergman's house or, possibly, we took sponge-baths. We had no refrigerator or icebox so the little food we had was stored in boxes under the sink. But we managed.

People donated old clothes to us and my mother sewed things together, piece by piece, to give us something halfway decent to wear. After a few weeks we really looked rather nice, so much so, that we had the reputation of being rich. And my mother, the wise woman, would say:" Keep them guessing. Don't say yes or no. It is nobody's business. Just keep your head up high. You have nothing to be ashamed of. And keep them guessing....!". Well, that is exactly what I did. We were proud of every little improvement in our way of life. Even though we had nothing, we never felt poor or deprived. Later in life, talking to friends about this time of my life, I always said: "We were not poor, we just did not have anything." That is how we felt and that is how we survived a very difficult time without it leaving any scars.

About a half year later a law was passed: people with large homes had to share them with families without homes. And so we moved upstairs into a lovely house in a fancy neighbourhood, where we normally could not have afforded to live. I was not aware how the owners of the house felt about it and I do not know whether they received money from my mother or from the Dutch government. I suspect the latter because my mother had no way of making a living. She gave some piano lessons but that was not enough for rent and food. But we moved in. It was not much of a move because we still did not own much. But little by

little our small upstairs apartment started to look like a furnished place. We probably received some furniture and other items as gifts. I do not remember anything about that. I was very much involved with my own problems and Mother never burderned Jacques or me with her troubles. I do remember that she decided one day to call on the people who lived in our pre-war house. As she was let in she saw many items which were ours from before the war. After some bickering, the new occupants of the house agreed to give us a few of our belongings. It was not much. I remember a picture, a reading lamp and a crystal wine bottle and some other little knick-knacks. But it was an improvement and it must have meant a lot to my mother to have some mementoes from her pre-war life.

September was approaching and it was time for me to start school. My mother requested an appointment to speak to the son of Anton Philips, the founder of the Philips Gloeilampen Fabriek. When she spoke to him she reminded him of Hans who had worked in his chemistry lab during the war and she told him that he had not returned after the war. As a favor she asked that Jacques and I would be admitted to the Lorentz Lyceum, a very exclusive school, mostly for the well-to-do people of Eindhoven. He agreed and so I was one of the fortunate ones to go to that excellent school. I chose the Gymnasium which prepares one for future university studies. Thanks to the good services of Ms. Tinbergen I was only one year behind and finished the six years of Gymnasium in four years instead of the usual six. The curriculum included, besides Dutch, English, French, German, Latin and Greek, mathematics, chemistry, biology, Dutch and world history and some sports. I was an average student. I never failed a test but I had to study hard and for many hours. It never came easy to me. But I passed from one year to another without failing.

A bigger prioblem was my social life. I had a terrible inferiority complex. I had a hard time talking to my peers, male and female alike. I remember walking a young lady home, she on a bike and I walking next to her. I liked her very much and I was trying to get better acquainted with her. I really did not have much to say to her. She was very pretty and one of the most sought after girls in school. She was very gracious. She did not insult me in any way or make me feel out of place but I knew I was. Needless to say, that was our last rendez-vous!

Somehow, as the years progressed, I became friends with four classmates, Kees Sparling, Henk van Amerongen, Lo Roggeveen and Hans Schellekens. We met regularly and discussed the latest events and school happenings. We also did some hiking and camping with one or more of them, especially with Kees Sparling, who was an Eagle Scout and a top student at Lorentz Lyceum. After graduating from the Gymnasium I lost touch with all except with Hans Schellekens who became my life- long friend.

When I was about sixteen years old I decided that I wanted to learn how to play the flute. Why, I do not know. My Uncle Philip had been an excellent flutist. Before the war he had been the first flutist of the Residentie Orchestra in Den Haag. He had played under the baton of famous conductors, such as Mengelberg and Toscanini and I remember that we often listened to concerts on the radio and my mother used to say: "That flute solo is played by Uncle Philip." I also had seen a professional picture of him, a very handsome, tall man with a mustach, standing straight and tall with his silver flute in his hands. Today, still, I think of him whenever I hear flute music which he used to play. So, this possibly influenced me to want to take up flute playing. Again, my mother helped. She wrote to Oom Philip's son, Ben Swaab, one of the two cousins of mine who had survived the war, and asked him if he had his father's flute. He had two of his father's flutes, one silver and one wooden. He agreed to give them to me together with a large collection of music which had belonged to his father. I cannot imagine what must have gone through his mind to give up these precious rememberances of his father, when he gave them to me.

Uncle Philip Swaab, killed during Holocaust. Brother of my Mother. Lived in Den Haag.

I took the flute study very seriously. Mr. Bergman,who had so graciously allowed us to live in his garage-studio and who was a very good flutist, became my flute teacher. It took me several weeks before I could get a decent tone out of the flute on which my uncle had played so beautifully. But eventually, after about two years, I mastered the technique to such a degree that Mr. Bergman said that he could not teach me a higher level and that I should look for a better teacher. Again, my mother helped. My new teacher was the first flutist of the provincial orchestra. However, he lived in Den Bosch, about forty km. North of Eindhoven, so every week I hitch-hiked up and down to my lesson. I do not know how I did it but I always arrived exactly on time, even though I often had to walk a mile or more from the place where my ride dropped me off, and I arrived back home in time to practice the flute and to do my homework.

Soon I became an accomplished flutist. I played only classical music and was lucky to receive the music library of Uncle Philip from cousin Ben Swaab. I still remember the tears in my mother's eyes when she saw her brother's handwriting and his name on every piece of music. But not for long. She was so brave and she was so proud of me. Around the same time I was introduced to a gentleman who played the clavichord very well. We would spend many hours every Sunday afternoon playing music by the classical composers. Soon, we were invited to play for groups, in churches and once as background for a local television show. I even got paid for it! That surprised me because I just loved to play and I felt

honored that so many people enjoyed my playing. At home we started to form ensembles with other, much older musicians and before we knew it our house was again filled with music, similarly as it had been before the war. Once, while visiting friends in Belgium, I was asked to replace the second flutist of the Antwerp Orchestra who had become ill. I had to sight-read that music (It was the "Moldau" by Smetana). I was extremely nervous but it went very well.

And so I was busy all day and every day with my school and flute studies. My social llife also started to improve. I gave talks to groups, giving the background of upcoming concerts in my hometown. I would borrow a record of the upcoming concert program and discuss the work and its composer. That meant, of course, that I had to do a lot of reading and preparation for the lectures. This, plus my studies and other activities, kept me busy day and night, literally. I never slept much anyway, so I used my sleepless hours fruitfully.

The time approached for my graduation. Graduating from the Gymnasium came all but easy. I needed some tutoring in Greek and I was very weak in chemistry. However, my weakest subject was geometry. Many times I went to the house of Hans Schellekens who helped me with the problems. To him everything was perfectly clear (he later became a professor of theoretical mathematics at the university of Utrecht in Holland) but I could not see it, no matter how he tried to explain it to me. Several weeks before the final exam, during which any subject ever studied during the six years of Gymnasium could be asked, I, in desperation, learned the answers to the three most complicated problems by heart. I just repeated sentence by sentence the complicated solution till I remembered the answers to all three problems. That took me many hours of drilling them into my head. Luck had it that, at the final exam, one of these problems was given as the test. Needless to say, I passed the geometry test with a perfect ten, the highest mark! My lowest mark at the final was for English which later became my main language! I was so happy to finish my studies at the Lorentz Lyceum and that I did not have to repeat that last year. It also helped to build up my self confidence.

After graduation I could not wait to leave my hometown. Jacques had already left two years earlier when he had finished his high school studies; however it was not his influence which made me decide to leave home. I am trying to think what my thoughts and feelings were during that time. I had no problems living with my mother. We got along fine and I never minded accompanying her whenever we went somewhere. I just felt ill at ease in my hometown. I occasionally went to the synagogue on Saturdays and always during the holidays but it was not the same without my grandfather, father and my brothers next to me. Mainly all the people I remembered from before the war had disappeared and the synagogue was mostly empty. I had no reason to sit in the front where we used to sit. Mostly I sat by myself in the rear. During the holidays there was a lot of crying for the lost families which made me feel very uncomfortable. Mother and I felt that life had to go on and that we should build from the start and not complain too much. Furthermore, I felt uncomfortable with the few Jewish youngsters around me. There was nobody left of my age and Jacques' friends had a light- hearted and easy way of conversing with which I was unable to partake.

Physically I also had a problem. It seemed that because of my lack of walking during my years in hiding, I had developed a strange way of moving. Once I was walking with Jacques and some of his friends when one of them remarked: "When Fred goes around a corner you first see his nose, then his head and then the rest of him." I did not become mad. I actually appreciated that he made me aware of it. I started to look at my mirror image in store windows and I saw that he was right; I was bent over and I stuck my chin far out while I was walking. So, I made sure that I gradually improved my posture. Yet it did not help my inferiority complex. Looking back now at the rest of my life I think that I had a need to accomplish something on my own. I wanted to be independent. I was then nineteen years old and, even though I was prepared for college studies, I knew that there was no way we could afford it. I had to earn money somehow. I wanted to be free of everything that seemed to keep me back in Eindhoven. Most of all, I wanted to separate myself from everything reminding me of the war years. My poor mother, who must have felt awful to see the last member of her family leave her, never discouraged me. As a matter of fact, she helped me. She contacted the Koens family, with whom she had stayed during the war years, and she arranged for me to stay with them.

Next -> CHAPTER 5: MY FIRST ADULT YEARS

Return to INDEX

CHAPTER 5: MY FIRST ADULT YEARS

Ria Koens, in Den Haag. Dec. 1945

Again, I started a whole new life. Carrying my faithful little brown suitcase, I went to Den Haag. The Koens family was very down to earth. They were a wonderful, warmhearted people. Mr. Koens was rather sickly and very quiet but he never complained. Mrs. Koens was more eager to talk but the hard years had carved many wrinkels in her face. Most exchanges took place between the two daughters, Ria and Dora, and me. They were much older than I was but I did not have much trouble conversing with them. Ria, the older sister, was an outstanding soprano. Later she turned into a Mezzo soprano and she performed in many countries in Europe. My mother, who had such a classical musical background, and Ria must have had an exciting relationship while my mother was living with them during the war years. Whenever Mother visited me, while I lived with the Koens, she always spent hours accompanying Ria on the piano and coaching her with the musical interpretation. My favorite time was when they were rehearsing songs by Mahler and Schubert. And I also enjoyed hearing Ria practice scales and intervals, which she did for many hours every day. Most people probably would not enjoy that but I did the same on the flute and I liked hearing her modulate her voice.

With Dora I had an entirely different relationship. She was not a strong but a very interesting young lady. Often she had to stay home from work and then we would have long talks. She also had an unusual talent. One evening she went to a seance and the person leading it approached and told her that she was an exceptionally strong "medium." That surprised Dora because she had never experienced anything like that before. Sometime later she tried contacting the "spirits" alone at home and within minutes she made contact. This all occurred before I came into the picture. She never did it professionally but within the family circle she frequently had "seances." She did it in several different ways. Sometimes she put a small footstool on the table. She put one hand on it and in a short time the footstool started to move. Then she went though the alphabet and the footstool came down at the table when she came to a certain letter. In this way sentences were formed that somehow made sense. There was no trick involved. She invited me to try to hold the footstool down but that was utterly impossible. Occasionally, the spirit would be angry and then the footstool would come down with a loud bang. At other times, when we had the whole family and my mother around the table, she layed one hand on the table and the

Dora Koens, 1945.

around the table, she layed one hand on the table and the table gave the signal. It was a heavy table and nobody else was picking it up. It was impossible to keep it down! Another technique was working with a "Luigi board." We simply took two thin wooden sticks in the form of a cross and a piece of cardboard with the alphabet and numbers on it. The "spirit" moved that around to the appropiate letter or number. None of us liked that so we stopped doing it.

What kind of "spirits" (for lack of a better word) would visit us? Interestingly, they were mostly famous opera singers. Sometimes they "performed;" the table would move around as they spelled out the words of the aria in the original language, French, Italian, English or German. Dora definitely was not a linguist, so whatever it was, it was fascinating and it was strong. One evening a famous Dutch tenor, who had recently died, came and we had a very interesting conversation with him discussing his previous life. On another occasion, when my mother was present, the spirit said that he was Hans, my oldest brother, who had never returned after the war. Of course, my mother was very upset and she wanted proof. Then he asked her to play a melody on the piano which had been one of his favorites and which he used to play before the war. That was one of the few unhappy seances we had. Usually, it was interesting and even sometimes funny. Eventually there came a time that they wanted to advise Dora and try to influence her life. This became gradually more annoying and after a while she decided to stop that activity.

I needed to find work as soon as possible. Somebody suggested that I should try to find something with the government. It was during this time of my life that I discovered a talent of which I was unaware until that moment but which I often used during the rest of my life. During the interview I was asked if I had any experience with office work and I answered "yes" even though I had never seen the inside of an office. "Could I type?" Again I said "yes" but this time I felt that I had to qualify it so I said "not very fast but I could improve very quickly." And that is how I landed in the office of the Waterworks Ministry. It really went very well. I caught on quickly with all the statistical calculations. My co -workers laughed at my typing. I only used two fingers of each hand but I managed to type fairly fast and with little or no mistakes. I was very proud of myself. I did not make much money but I managed to send some to my mother regularly. I do not remember if I paid the Fam. Koens or that my mother sent them money. I am forever grateful to them for giving me the opportunity to become more or less independent. It gave me some confidence.

One day we went on an inspection tour of a section of the Rotterdam Harbor, the largest harbor in Europe. I was all excited as we travelled to Rotterdam and I saw the enormous cranes and ships in the harbor. My thrill was cut short when we approached a tall wooden scaffold which stretched for a long way over the water. We climbed very high and then we walked over these wooden planks with nothing but water under us. I did not know then that I had a terrible fear of heights but it seemed to me that we went on for miles and that the scaffolding was hundreds of feet high. In great trepidation I told my supervisor that I was getting dizzy. They helped me down quickly. I thought that I would get fired on the spot but

the supervisor told me that I would not have to do that again. It was really very nice of him but from then on I felt insecure at my work and I decided to quit. I had worked there for about one year.

I felt that I had had enough of being independent so I said goodbye to the Koens family and returned to Eindhoven. Now followed two of the happiest years of my life in Holland. The government built small houses especially for families like ours. The subsidised rent was a mere twenty-five guilders per month. The house was new and modern with all the latest appliances. It had three small bedrooms and a small livingroom and kitchen. But it was lovely and light and it was situated at the edge of town with only farmland behind us.There was no garden in the front but in the back we had a small garden which within one year was filled with small trees and all kinds of flowers. Mother gave the smallest room to me as my private study. Was I ever proud! I could close the door and study the flute as much as I wanted and I could have privacy for the first time in my life if I wished it. But Mother and I got along very well so I spent the evenings with her in the living room. By this time we had some furniture. The living room was really very warm and cozy.

I found work at the Philips factory. Again I applied my newly found talent and I told the interviewer about the great experience I had working in a govenment office and that I was a good typist. So, I started my second "career" as a typist. Now I was lucky. My typing was too slow but I made no mistakes, so within a short time they removed me from the typist pool and made me a supervisor! I had my own desk and I had to give work to the typists and inspect their work! Even with that quick promotion I made only one hundred and twenty-five guilders every two weeks which was the equivalent of about thirty dollars. I handed that all to my mother who gave me five guilders per week as pocket money. I felt like a millionnaire! Occasionally we went out and I accompanied Mother everywhere.

Since the end of the war we had a visit from the only surviving brother of my mother every few years. His name was Maurice Swaab. Before the war he had had a diamond factory in Amsterdam and in Antwerp (Belgium). In 1939, when things were getting bad, he closed both factories, took his diamonds and money, his wife, Tante Lies and his three sons and first went to England, later to New York. There he opened another diamond factory. He was very successful. Whenever he visited us it was quite an event. He brought things for us and he had a car! He re-opened the factory in Antwerp where he had a manager and he probably left a car there which he used whenever he was in Europe. In those days only few rich people in Holland were able to afford a new car, so we were really thrilled to get a ride in my uncle's car. He was a great photographer and he inspired me to get into that hobby which gave me much pleasure during my whole life. Either he or my mother gave me a little box camera and with that I made some beautiful pictures. On a visit to Belgium I took a picture in Ghent which was so beautiful that his Belgium factory manager, who was also an artist, made a painting from it. I really felt honored.

One day, soon after I returned to Eindhoven we discussed the possibility of emigrating to America with Uncle Maurice. I had seen some movies of America and I was impressed.

Jacques also talked that day about it. We meant for the whole family to emigrate. Uncle said that he would have to be a guarantor for us and that he could do that only for one at a time. After one was settled he would be the guarantor for the next one.

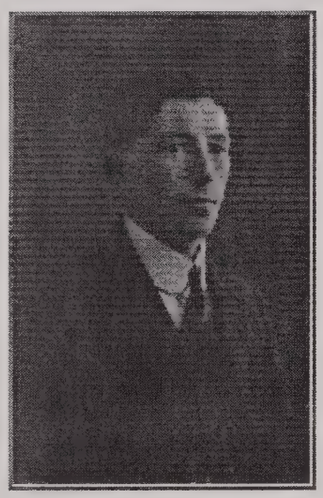
I do not know what Jacques was doing about it but I jumped at the opportunity. I talked it over with my mother and with some knowledgeable people and before long I went to Rotterdam for a day to apply for a visa to America. There I learned to my consternation that there was a quota system and that it would be about two years before my turn would come. I received much help from an organization called the H.I.A.S. They advised me of the steps I needed to take. I filled out the appropriate forms and went back to Eindhoven and to my work in the office.

The next two years I spent preparing for my emigration to America. I read about New York and I always got excited when I saw a movie or a newsreel which showed scenes of New York City. During another visit by Uncle Maurice he talked more concretely about my approaching move. He promised me a job and said that I could stay in his house, at least for a short while. I must mention that Aunt Lies, his wife, never accompanied him during his trips to Holland. I barely remembered her. I believe that I saw her only once or twice before I met her again in America.

These last years in Eindhoven were pleasant enough. My work was steady and my social life was improving. I joined a bycicle club, a bridge club and an Esperanto organization. The latter I helped organise. With my knowledge of Latin, Greek, German and French it was easy for me to learn Esperanto. I was on the board of the budding organization. I am not certain but I believe I was the secretary. Anyway, I helped organise a trip to Denmark where we were guests of the Aarhus Esperanto Club. That was one of the many highlights of that time.

The bridge club met regularly but there I made no social contacts. The bycicle club, however, gave me great pleasure. Nearly every Sunday we went on a day long bike ride with picnics and a lot of fun. It was a healthy and fun activity and for the first time I felt comfortable with some of the young men and women; I even got to know one young lady fairly well, even though our relationship was strictly platonic.

It seems strange to me now that I still felt very uncomfortable around the Jewish youth. One reason may be that none of these were my age. They were all older. One must realise that not many young Jews survived the war but the few that did were my brother's age and older. I strung along with them and I was amazed at their easy banter and laughter. I had a hard time keeping up with that. Religeously I was totally un-involved. I felt ill at ease the few times I went to the synagogue. The people I had loved were not there anymore and the few who survived seemed distant to me even though I had known them as a child.



Uncle Simon Swaab, killled during Holocaust. Brother of my mother, father of Fietje Swaab.

One day my only surviving female cousin, who lived in Amsterdam, visited us and I fell head over heels in love with her. I remembered Fietje, the daughter of Oom Simon Swaab from one or two visits we made to Amsterdam when I was probably seven or nine years old. But now she was a beautiful young lady. She was the only survivor of her family. Her father, her mother and, I believe, two brothers all were killed during the Holocaust. She had been hidden by nuns in a cloister. It came as a shock to me that she had turned Catholic. Even though I had no strong religeous feelings, I found it shocking that she had converted. Nevertheless, I seriously believe that, if I had stayed in Holland, I would have explored the possibility of marriage. As it was, I left soon after that visit. I did look her up in Amsterdam to say goodbye before I left for America. She lived with a wonderful family who treated her like a daughter. Later she married a priest who had left the priesthood. She had a wonderful family life with him and his sisters (all ex-nuns). Unfortunately, she got killed at a young age in a one-car accident, in Germany, of all places. I always thought it ironic that she had escaped the German concentration camps but that she had to die in Germany after all.

Fietje Swaab-Dyker, April 1951

Mother, Jacques and I during a soiree. Dec. 1950.

My musical life also greatly expanded during these two years. Playing for hours every week with my friend-clavichord player (unfortunately I forgot his name), I became quite proficient playing the flute and I received many invitations to play with chamber music groups. I especially liked the concert I gave with my teacher playing duets in churches and once in a beautiful cathedral in Zaltbommel, some forty miles North of Eindhoven. Mother and I often went to concerts and operas and at home we often had trios, quartets or quintets in the evenings. Sometimes my brother Jacques joined us. He was a pretty good violinist.

So, life was good and relatively easy. Financially, we seemed to make ends meet and even to be able to afford some extras. One thing was always hanging over our heads: would anybody still return from the concentration camps, maybe even my brother Hans? But that was not to be.

We received regularly (I do not remember weekly or monthly) a newspaper sized publication in which the names of Jews killed in concentration camps were listed. These lists contained the names, places and dates of death. The Nazis, in their crazy efficiency, had kept records of every individual when he was deported, to which camp and where (not how) he had died. It was very difficult, especially for Mother, to see names of her family and relatives appearing, one after the other. There would be no one returning. The only name that never showed up was that of Hans and Mother never gave up hoping that some day he would return, maybe from behind the Communist Iron Curtain. It never happened.

One thing was good about this information: inheritance could now be settled because the order in which people had died was now officially known. As it was, my grandfather had owned a store on the Demer, the main shopping street in the center of Eindhoven. We received an inheritance from that property. In Holland the inheritance goes from grandfather to the children and then through my father, who had died in 1941 to the three grandchildren. My mother inherited Hans' share and Jacques and I shared the other two thirds. When I left Holland I gave my share of fl. 10000,00 to my mother.

And so the two years of waiting for my quota number to come up went by very fast and very pleasantly. Then one day the mail brought a very official looking envelope. I could not wait to open it. There it was: I was to come to Rotterdam to receive my final papers and instructions. I went the following day. Mother went with me. She must have been very apprehensive; her youngest son was preparing to leave her, the last one to go. She would be all alone. I did feel terrible for her but at the same time my adrenalin was flowing. I could hardly conceal my excitement when I received my official papers from the American consulate to immigrate to America! The time had come. That same day I booked passage on the New Amsterdam, the flagship of the Holland America line. The date was set for June 2nd, 1952. We immediately returned to Eindhoven and the next day I gave notice to my supervisor that I would be leaving soon.

Me, Den Haag, Dec. 1951.

Now I was anxious to leave Eindhoven. It had too many bad memories for me. I felt obliged to visit the families who had risked their lives in order to save mine and I did so at regular intervals. But at the same time I felt that too much was still left in the contact with the unpleasant past and I wanted to separate myself from that and start a new and hopefully a more normal life.

Before I knew it the day was there and I was packing my little brown suitcase, the same suitcase that had held my few belongings during the years in hiding. It did not hold much: an extra pair of pants, some shirts, some extra pieces of underwear, socks and one book: the biography of Mozart. I had quite a collection of books accumulated since I started working but I only had room for one book and that is the one I chose. Besides this little brown suitcase I took my flute and my little Brownie camera and twenty-five guilders in my pocket. Mother and Jacques accompanied me to Rotterdam, to the same harbor where three years earlier I had walked so fearfully on the scaffolds high above the water. But this time I was transported on a small tender to this large and wonderful ship, the New Amsterdam. It was so very hard to say goodbye to my poor mother. I realised that I was leaving her now completely alone. I did not feel good about it, but I realised a once in a lifetime opportunity and Mother never discouraged me in any way. We all had tears in our eyes when the tender left the dock. But I have to admit that as I approached this enormous ship my eyes dried up very fast and my heart pounded with excitement. I had never before traveled so luxuriously. Of course, I had the smallest, lowest priced cabin on the ship, but to me it seemed the ultimate luxury. After I placed my little suitcase in the cabin I went back on deck to wave my last farewell to Jacques and Mother. I could see them way below and far away. They seemed so small. I waved to them and they waved back. But after a while I became impatient. I could not wait for the ship to leave and to be totally independent for the first

time in my life.

Finally, the ship's horn gave the signal and slowly the dock disappeared. With a final wave to my family I started another entirely new life. I stayed on deck as long as I could see land and then I went down to explore the ship.

Next -> CHAPTER 6: MY LIFE IN THE NEW WORLD

Return to INDEX

CHAPTER 6: MY LIFE IN THE NEW WORLD

I shared the cabin with two other men. To my shame, I do not have any recollection of these two persons with whom I shared such a small space for the next seven days. I do remember that I had the lower bunk bed. I had not made the selection. It just was the only bed left. The passage across was rather uneventful. I spent nearly all day looking at the ocean; it was so beautiful. The colors of the water changed constantly, depending on the time of day and what kind of weather it was. We made two short stops, one in Cherbourg, France and one in Portsmouth, England. I made no contact with any of the passengers, even though as a twenty-two year old bachelor I probably should not have had any trouble meeting people. But I still felt uncomfortable talking to strangers. I never knew how to start. And so I was alone but never lonely. I enjoyed the trip completely. One night it was stormy and the next morning everybody was seasick. I was not and I was one of the very few passengers eating lunch and dinner that day. Did I ever get good service; five waiters were constantly around me and I got double portions! I had no complaints!

Finally, the last day arrived. We entered New York harbour before six o'clock in the morning and I made sure I was on deck with my camera to take pictures. Only immigrants can understand the emotions one feels when one sees the Statue of Liberty for the first time. It was in the early morning light that it first appeared in the distance. As the ship entered the harbour it loomed larger and larger. When I finally was directly in front of the Statue she seemed to me a benign looking beautiful woman who looked at me with love and she appeared to send me a sign of encouragement. It brought tears to my eyes, this time of joy and anticipation.

After a long time we docked. The first thing I noticed was a lot with hunderds of cars parked in even, neat rows. I thought that these were new cars brought in by some ship from overseas. When I remarked to someone about this he laughed and explained to me that it was a parking lot for cars belonging to individuals visiting or working at the harbor. Welcome to the New World; I had never seen so many cars in my life!

Before we disembarked there was an announcement that representatives of the US Armed Forces were on board to interview passengers entering the USA on a permanent visa. That included me, so I went to the designated area and soon I met, for the first time, a recruiting officer. He was very pleasant and patient (my school-English was at best mediocre) as he explained to me the different options available. This was during the Korean War and he told me that I could either register for the draft right then or I could postpone registration up to six months. I gave it a quick thought and I came to the conclusion that I did not want to start a new career only to have it interrupted after a short while; so I registered right there on the ship, especially as he explained to me that as a US soldier I would become a US citizen without waiting for the usual five years. I may have been naive then but I still believe that it was a good decision. And so I was registered for the draft even before I disembarked the ship!

Uncle Maurice Swaab, New York. Brother of my mother. Dec. 1944

After this was finished I started to look for my uncle and aunt and my three cousins whom I could not remember at all from the one time we had met some thirteen years earlier. I became quite concerned because I did not see them and here the ship had docked some five hours ago. As I walked onto the dock I saw hundreds of people milling around. I did not know what to do. I was all alone the first hour in a strange country, people speaking a language I was not used to. I heard some anouncements but the loudspeaker made the words even more unintelligeable. I saw a sign "Baggage" and I knew what that meant. So I followed that sign and before I knew it I was in an enormous hall, larger than I had ever seen, with large signs with letters of the alphabeth. As I looked for the "G" I was approached by a lady who introduced herself as a representative of the H.I.A.S., an organization I had encountered earlier in Rotterdam. It is an organization which assists inmmigrants. They do a wonderful job helping people who are as confused and worried as I was. She asked if I had transportation or if I needed any assistance. I felt so relieved. I explained to her my situation and just then my eyes caught sight of my uncle waving to me at the end of the hall. My heart started racing. I was so excited and relieved. After a fast check by the customs man (my little suitcase was no challenge for them and the H.I.A.S. lady helped answer the questions I did not comprehend) Uncle Maurice and I embraced and I was introduced to my cousins Alex, Jacques and Henry Swaab. Tante Lies was not at the dock.

And now followed in quick order many new impressions. First we walked to that enormous parking lot full of cars. I could not imagine how Uncle Maurice could find his car out of all the rows and rows of cars parked there. And how long it took to get out of that enormous area until we finally eased into a four-lane road with hundreds of cars around us. People born in America cannot fathom the culture shock of a young man from a little country like Holland when he sees how large and open the city is. Can you imagine calling New York city "open"? But that is how it appeared to me during my first encounter with freeways and tunnels. I had never seen so much traffic and so many wide roads. Then we entered the Lincoln Tunnel and I thought that it would never end. While driving, Uncle and the cousins tried to converse with me. They did speak Dutch but after living and going to school in America for so long their Dutch was as bad as my English. But somehow we had a conversation. I told them that I had already registered for the draft. That gave them a good laugh. They thought that I was a fast worker!. But they admonished me that with the Korean

war in full force, the chance was that I would be drafted very soon. Well, was that ever a prophetic statement. Little did I know then that four months later I would have to report for my induction into the American Army.

But for now I was relishing all the new impressions and the attention I was receiving from my cousins. After what seemed hours to me, we arrived at their house in Forest Hills, Queens. It was a beautiful Tudor style two story home surrounded by a lovely small garden. There Aunt Lies was waiting for us and with her was Lydia, cousin Henry's first wife. She was so beautiful, very dark with ebony black hair and shining black eyes. I think I fell in love with her instantly and it was a shock to me when Henry divorced her years later.

After some more niceties Aunt Lies gave me the run-down of the house and told me what she expected from me. I can best describe her as a lady of the old European elite. Always well dressed and taken care of, she would never set foot in a grocery store or butcher. She placed her orders by phone and had these delivered to the house! To me that seemed the ultimate of luxury. I certainly was not used to that kind of routine. It did not take her long to let me know that I could stay in the house for a short time, and she stressed "short" because she had just recently been freed of the responsibility of taking care of her three sons and she certainly did not want to start all over again. So, yes I was welcome but not for too long. Uncle explained to me that he would train me in his diamond cutting place,and that I would get free room and board plus twenty-five dollars per week. Wow, I thought I was a millionaire: twenty-five dollars per week to spend all on myself . I was thrilled, epecially because I had found out already that cigarettes were one quarter per pack in contrast to one guilder in Holland and dress shirts were five dollars instead of twenty-five guilders. This was great!

Next -> CHAPTER 7: MY FIRST CAREER IN THE NEW WORLD

Return to INDEX

CHAPTER 7: MY FIRST CAREER IN THE NEW WORLD

I received my first introduction to the New York Subway System. I was so impressed by the size of the train stations and the inumerable masses of people pushing and shoving to get into and out of the trains. And then the transfer at Grand Central Station which is like a whole city under the ground. To me it was all very exciting. Soon I was introduced to my new career, that of a diamond cutter. Uncle had a space on 47th Street in the middle of the New York diamond district. First there was his office, a small room with a spotlight and a large lens on the desk. As I walked in my uncle was bent over the desk and he had a little hammer in his hand and a narrow metal bar. He waved me over and explained to me that with one tap with the hammer he was going to split the diamond exactly where he had drawn a thin black line. One hit and he would make several thousands of dollars or it would have to be cut into little industrial diamonds worth less than one hundred dollars. I watched him make the tap and I was very relieved to see that he was successful. Later I learned that he was one of the most knowledgeable and honest diamond cutters in New York. I was more than relieved when I learned that I did not have to do that sort of work although he urged me to learn it if I wanted to make a real good living. Well, I was already on my way with twenty-five dollars per week, I thought.

Next, Jacques took me to the adjacent room. There were several long tables lined with rows of fast whirling saws. Each sawblade leaned on a small diamond held in place by metal arms. Around each diamond was again a narrow black line but this time the blade did the cutting. That was to be my job to learn. It seemed easy enough to me but I soon found out that it was anything but easy. First you had to cement a metal post on each side of that little diamond. In the beginning I fumbled and fumbled. Jacques warned me that if I dropped that little piece of glass I would have to go on my hands and knees and little by little go through every bit of dust on the floor until I found it. Wow! I was ready to walk out but I did not. After all, where was I to go? It took me several weeks to get a hang of it and some more weeks until I learned how to align the blade, which I had to cover with oil mixed with diamond dust. Eventually I got it mostly right. Then life at work became a little more relaxed even though every once in a while I had a little nerve-wrecking accident which sometimes kept me on my knees for several hours. When things went well it became rather tedious; once the saws were properly in place there was nothing to do for hours except to check once in a while to see if the saw stayed aligned. The rest of the time we spent sitting on the window sill overlooking the street below us and mostly gossiping which is not my favorite occupation. I soon realised that this was not to be my lifelong career.

My knowledge of English left a lot to be desired. I went to a high school where they had an evening class for immigrants. They talked about current events and I learned a lot there. However what was lacking were every day expressions, idioms. One day I was walking on Broadway. The street was very crowded and just ahead of me were three people talking rather loudly to each other. I slowed down somewhat and decided to stay behind them and to listen in on their conversation. And so I picked up many every day expressions by listening to people's conversations in the street. I did that regularly for the first month in New York

and, believe me, that is a good, if not a well mannered, way to learn English.

At one point during the summer Aunt and Uncle went away for two weeks and I had to fend for myself. I was told that both the business and the house would be closed during that time, so I had to find somewhere to live and also I would not be paid for those two weeks, so I had to find a job quickly. Where to find a job in such a short time? After a lot of schlepping I got a job as a busboy in a Horn & Hardard coffee shop, which meant that I had to report for work every day at six in the morning, six days a week, to help set up the tables and I had to clear and clean the tables after customers finished eating all day long. People were constantly coming and going so you had to be on the go all day long, too. For this you got one dollar per hour and two free meals. I thought that it was a pretty good deal. I found a YMCA walking distance from work where I had a small room on the tenth floor for ten dollars per week. So, I had money to spare! And I rather liked my job because I could have some small talk with some of the nicer customers when it slowed down a bit and some even gave me a five or ten cent tip! Not bad at all, I thought. I even was considering quitting my diamond cutting career and trying a career as a waiter. After one week I changed my mind and I was glad when Uncle and Aunt returned and I had a more normal life.

At one point during the first two months in New York Aunt Lies arranged a date for me with a young lady, a daughter of a friend of uncle Maurice. Aunt Lies explained to me that she was very available and that she was the only daughter of a millionair. What was I to do with a daughter of a millionair? I had no money to entertain her the way she was used to. Anyway, we met and I took her to a nice place (after dinner time!) for a drink and some dancing. Now I must tell you that I did not know how to dance. I had taken one series of dance lessons before I left Holland to prepare me for just such an occasion but that did not make me a dancer. To make a long story short, the evening was a disaster, at least in my eyes. I was extremely uncomfortable talking to her. I do not remember any part of our conversation but I do remember the long, painful periods of silence. Aunt Lies told me later that the young lady had liked me but I did not want to pursue it any further. That was the end of my first "affair" in the New World.

After about three months Aunt Lies made some strong hints about my stay in her house, something like: "It is time for you to meet some young people and get out of the house." I had no idea what I could do or where to start. She suggested that my music could open doors for me and she explained that I would have to join the music union if I wanted to play music at all. So one day I went to the music union building. It was located upstairs in an old building. I entered a nearly empty room. Behind a large desk sat a cigar smoking heavy-set man. Leaning back in his office chair he looked me over and asked me what I wanted. I told him of my music background and that I would like to play the flute with a quartet or quintet or maybe in an orchestra. He immediately started to interrogate me about my background, my family, my friends in Holland and my political affiliation. I told him in my best English that I was not interested in politics and that I just wanted to play music. Then he asked me if I had any friends who were communists or friends who knew persons who were communists. This was during the Senator McCarthy days when the government saw

communist ghosts everywhere. Anyway, I was fed up and walked out. This was the end of my professional career as a musician.

When I returned home and told Aunt Lies about my adventure she was rather agitated. After all, I could not stay in their house forever and I had to meet people, maybe a girl, and become independent. So, she helped me look through some magazines and newspapers to get some ideas and she found a winner! She told me about the Steinway Hall on 57th Street where there were music performances for amateurs. All one had to do is register there and they would give you a date and you could give your own concert. I went there and someone set an evening date for my concert. They even supplied me with an accompanist.

When the evening arrived I was quite excited. Here was a good sized concert hall with a large audience waiting for three soloists to give a concert. I was the last one to perform after the intermission. I was thrilled to see that nobody had left and that I ~~was would be~~ playing for a full house. After my performance I received a long and warm applause. And then something happened which I will never be able to explain. I would call it a miracle. At the end of the applause I stepped towards the front of the stage and announced with a clear voice that I was interested in meeting people to form a chamber music group. I do not know where I got the idea or the courage to do that but something from way deep inside gave me the inspiration. I left the stage not knowing what would come of it. When I entered the hallway to leave the building a long line of people were waiting for me. The congierge explained to me that they wanted to be interviewed by me. I do not know where it came from but something inside made me behave very dignified and professional. I asked the congierge for a table and a chair on each side of the table and I started to interview one person after the other. I posed just a few questions: What instrument do you play, how well, do you play mostly classical music and where can I reach you and what would be the best time of the day. This went on for a long time until the congierge told me that it was approaching midnight and that he had to lock the building. There were still three or four people left, so I only took their telephone numbers and told them I would call them soon.

The last person at the end of the long line was an attractive young lady. What made me do what I did next? During this whole evening something seemed to direct me to do things which were not natural to me. I said I wanted to interview her also but that we were being thrown out of the building. Did she know a coffee shop or restaurant where we could talk over a cup of coffee? She knew of an "Automat" and there, over a cup of coffee we talked for a long time. We both seemed to want to impress each other. She described how she had studied the piano for many years, that she was a better than average pianist. I, being on a roll now, played the interviewer and asked her many questions about her musical background. First we were very serious but soon the ice was broken. She said that we should order something to eat and that we should "go Dutch." Well, that struck me as funny, I told her, because I was Dutch but I had never heard that expression before. So, she explained that it meant that we each ~~would~~ had to pay our own share. That suited me fine, especially as I was low on cash and did not want to appear to be a tightwad. So, we had a good laugh and from then on we had an animated discussion mostly about our family background. That young lady's

name was Anita Amsel and she was to become my wife for the following forty years!

After a while we decided to leave. I insisted on accompaying her home. Fortunately, she did not object to going by subway; I certainly could not have afforded to take her home in a taxi. While riding the subway we made a date for the following Sunday afternoon to go through some music and see if she could join the group of musicians. At the entrance to her apartment in Jackson Heights I shook her hand and said a polite goodbye. I was not very experienced with first time dates and I did not quite know what an American young lady expected of me. As it was, it probably put her at ease about our upcoming date.

The following Sunday afternoon I went to her house with my flute and a pile of music. As I approached her apartment I noticed a Mezuzza on the door. Even though I had had little or no contact with my religion since before the war, I felt good seeing this traditional sign of a Jewish family on the doorpost of the house. As soon as she opened the door I said: "I am glad you are Jewish." With a little smile she asked: "Just to play music?" I did not react to that because I really came only to play music. I immediataly felt comfortable in the apartment. She lived with her parents who had come from Europe in the early 1900's. The living room was simply decorated but I recognized some of the European decor and it was warm and cozy.

For the next five(!) hours we played many of the selections which I used to play with my accompanist in Holland and it went very well. Anita was an excellent and serious pianist. We played music and hardly talked, except for some comments about the interpretation or the selection of the music. Much later she told me that she was surprised that I could play so long and so intensely without a break for food or drink. Finally she said that it would be a good time to eat something. So, she prepared some hamburgers and fried potatoes and we talked some more. Romance or love was not part of our conversation. After a while I wanted to leave. I started to feel a little nervous. I felt a warm feeling for her, I liked her but I was afraid. I did not know what to say or do, kiss her or not, I had no idea. So I just wanted to leave. She offered to walk me to the subway and I accepted the offer gratefully because I did not know the neighbourhood very well. And then, again, I said something, I do not know how it came about, but I told her that I would like her to be my accompanist for life! Where did I get the idea and the courage to say such a thing after just one musical(!) date. But I felt so sure of myself that I said it just like that and I really meant it. Of course, this was totally unexpected for her and she did not encourage me in any way. But later she told me that she already had some feelings while we were playing music that afternoon. Anyway, we started to do some serious dating. And I took her to fancy places. Every week I blew my whole salary (twenty-five dollars!) on our dates, no more Dutch Treats. I wanted to be a bigshot. So, one time I took her to the Waldorf Astoria where we danced on the roof. Really fancy. I kept looking at the menu but there was nothing that two people could have for so little money but Anita was very gracious. She must have felt my predicament and she chose a dish of cheese and crackers and each of us had one drink. She was my kind of girl! As it was, it took care of a whole week's wages. Later we went to concerts and to musicals. We had a great time and we grew closer.

When I told my cousin at work about it he was in a state of shock. "Other young men take years to find a wife and here you just arrived from Europe and you are making plans? Impossible!" But they did encourage me and they gave me all kinds of advice some of which I followed and some of which I wisely ignored. Of course, I also wrote my mother about it and she cautioned me to go it slow. Well, she did not know my girl, so she was worried that I was going with some young American girl just because I was alone. This was not the case. Anita was very mature and never took advantage of my inexperience. She told me right away that she was seven years older than I but that did not faze me either. She was young in her ideas and attitude and we just had a lot of fun and, above all, I had found a person with whom I felt one hundred percent comfortable. We could talk for hours and never was there a moment of uneasy silence. She even confided in me that, on the evening of my concert, her girlfriend had convinced her to skip a Spanish class in order to go to this concert. She had said that they might meet some nice boys there! So, Anita did skip that class which was entirely against her character, to go to a concert into which I was pushed by Aunt Lies! Fate?

Then, one day, some time in September 1952, there arrived the notorious letter: "Greetings" ! I had to report for a medical examination in preparation for the draft into the US Army, barely three months after I had registered for the draft on the ship in the harbor. I called Anita right away and we talked about this for a long time. She knew more about the draft because of her brother and sister-in-law who both had been in the Army. So, she predicted that I would be called for basic training very soon. And was she right! Soon I received a letter to report for induction into the Army on October 21, 1952. It was my turn. I did not know what to expect but I was rather excited about this new adventure and I was happy to have a way to get out of the diamond cutting business.

When the day arrived for my official induction Anita accompanied me to the induction station. I was very unsure of myself but I put up a brave face and before long I kissed my beloved goodbye and stepped inside another new world. How many times had this happened in my young life? I was only twenty-three years old, had arrived in a new world only four and a half months before and here I stood already, lining up with a bunch of strangers to board a bus to who knows where. We were told we were going to camp Kilmer, somewhere in New Jersey. They might have well said Timboctoo, it would have meant the same to me. Anyway, I stepped into that ugly, Army-green bus with my trustworthy little brown suitcase, and with a quick last wave to Anita I was on my way to new adventures.

When we arrived at Camp Kilmer we were immediately lined up in formation and we had our first roll call. The sergeant calling off the names became quite confused when my turn came. How was he to pronounce "Groenewoudt." Well, whatever came out, I got the idea, and said "Here, Sir!" Then we were sent to the supply sergeant who gave us some awful looking clothes. We were told to change as quickly as possible and then to fall out in formation again "on the double." With my poor knowledge of English I could barely understand the orders which were barked at us but I saw everybody scurrying around, so, I

did the same, and before you could say "Hail to the chief" I stood in formation in a badly fitting uniform; I was an American soldier! We were taken to a large hall where we were sworn in and where an officer explained to us what was expected of us, what our rights and our duties were and the pay and benefits we would get. I looked around that large room. There were hundreds of first day soldiers staring at the speaker. Did they understand him? I did not! I had no idea what was going on. Everybody seemed to have such a strange accent and they talked so fast! So, when we were dismissed I asked someone near me what we were to do. He helped me a lot. He showed me a list with names and when I found my name it showed the barrack to which I had to report. After some difficulty I found it and there was another soldier hollering at us. I had never before seen such a stern looking person before so I was quite impressed with his appearance but I could not understand one word he said. By now I had already learned just to copy what everybody else was doing (I am a fast learner!) and that worked well for me for most of the following twenty-three months. Nearly all the cadres came from the deep south. During my nearly two years in the Army I never managed to get a hang of their dialect. I still do not understand how I got through without getting into big trouble.

The following day we were called out early in the morning for "work detail." Again, I followed the others, this time to a road through a field. After a few un-intelligable commands everybody started bending down. They walked in a line picking up cigarette butts, tearing them apart and putting them in bags which were given to us. We spent most of the day that way, with an occasional break ("smoke if you have one" or "take ten"). When I asked a fellow soldier "ten of what" I caused quite an uproar. They thought that it was funny but I really did not know what he meant. And so started my education in a kind of English, different from anything I had learned before and some of which I had to unlearn after my army days. But I caught on fast.

We did get three full meals every day. I do not know why but that amazed me. You just lined up and you got a lot of non-descript food on your tray, all for free. I thought that it was great. All that free food plus ninety-five dollars per month. I was rich! Cigarettes were two dollars per carton in the PX. What would I do with all that money? Even the telephone calls to my girlfriend, Anita, were free if you were willing to stand in line for hours waiting for your turn.

After a few days of this routine we received our orders for basic training and the following morning we boarded buses to Fort Lee, Virginia. I felt very lonely even among so many of my peers. They were all laughing and joking and I could not follow their conversations. Now I lucked out. At one of the stops I was sitting in a coffee shop with a group of soldiers when one of them took an interest in me. He talked clearly and slowly with the New York accent I was more used to. He asked me where I came from. He asked me if I was a "Landsman." I did not know what that meant but it sounded friendly enough so I said that I was. He immediately brought another fellow over, also a "Landsman." Then I realised that this meant "Jewish" and I was thrilled to find two such nice "Landsmannen" on my bus. For the remainder of the trip they sat near me and helped me whenever I was confused about

something. Then some soldiers started telling jokes and everybody just roared with laughter. Of course, I did not understand any of it, so I asked my newly found friends. And that started another round of laughing and giggling. "He doesn't know what that is? You don't know what that is"? They thought that even funnier than the joke so they were rolling in the aisle with laughter. They tried to explain it but they laughed so hard they could hardly talk. When I finally got the idea I was quite embarrassed and I must say that during my entire Army life I managed to refrain from using foul language or telling dirty jokes. I really saw no need for it and I still feel that way.

I must now introduce you to these two fine, young men. The first one was Elliot Kaminsky with whom I still have occasional contact. He was (and still is) a strong looking, heavy set young man with a friendly round face with thick, black curly hair. He always had a benevolent smile, a man you could trust. We were together for a long time and we had one thing in common: we both had a serious relationship with a New York girl, so we had a lot to talk about. The other young man was Stanley Nash. He was a studious looking person. I believe that he already was married. In any event, even though we ended up in different Army units we ran into each other several times, even overseas.

The ride to Virginia was now much more pleasant. I started to look around more and I noticed the beautiful, green scenery as we approached our camp. It was really quite enjoyable and somehow I started to enjoy the Army life until we arrived at Fort Lee. It was a dreary looking place, at least where our barracks were. Until things got sorted out our routine was similar to what it was in Camp Kilmer but soon we started our basic training. I enjoyed the physical part of our training, the calistenics, the running and the long day-hikes in the woods, even though we were loaded down with our rifles and our gear and we often had to march in a drenching downpour. All that I did not mind. What bothered me more were the insults we had to accept from our trainers and the extra duties we had to do, such as K.P. duty, which was helping out in the kitchen, and the clean-up duties. And I still had lots of problems understanding the cadres (trainers) who all seem to come from the backwoods of the deep South. One tried to be friendly to me. He had a whole conversation with jokes and laughter and he talked on and on. I just kept smiling at him and saying "Uhum-uhum" but I did not know what he was talking about. I was glad that he did not notice my predicament. Another problem was the announcements over the so-called "bitch boxes," the loudspeaker system which went to all the barracks. I never could make out what they were saying so I either asked someone to tell me or I just did as they did. Another pitfall for me were the barrack inspections. In the first place, I never caught on how the Army wanted me to make the bed and how to arrange the footlocker I had. The inspecting officer would tell me something which I hardly understood and I would just say "Yes, Sir!" Once this almost got me into serious trouble when I had something of my uniform out of place and the answer to his inquiry should have been "No, Sir!". There was a loud snicker in the barracks and that did get that officer mad. I quickly explained to him that I had only recently arrived from Holland. Fortunately, he was quite understanding and he punished the rest of the barracks but not me. That did not ingratiate me with the rest of the guys but I felt pretty proud of myself anyway.

Another problem I had with these inspections was that they were rather pompous. The sergeant in the barrack would loudly anounce the arrival of the officer and we had to scurry to the foot of our beds and stand at attention and salute the inspector. That routine tickled my funny bone and I sometimes had trouble containing my laughter. Also I always wondered how the sergeant knew the officer was entering the barrack as the sergeant's office was on one side of the barrack and the officer entered from the other side. I still do not know the answer to that riddle.

Then we had our weapons training. Again, I could not understand the orders yelled out by our cadres. That was a bigger problem especially sometimes when we were training with live amunition. I surely learned fast to stay low. One of the worst classes for me was when they taught us about the different weapons, the pistols, carbines, rifles and grenade launchers and machine guns which we not only had to fire but also take apart, clean and, after an inspection, re-assemble. I really was serious about wanting to learn because I realized that I ~~had a~~ good chance that I could be sent to a combat zone in Korea and that this knowledge could save my life. But here I sat in the class not understanding one word of the nomenclature or the instructions given by the Southern cadres and I have to admit that when I did end up in Korea during the war I still was unable to put my weapons together again after our weekly cleaning for inspection. Luckily, there was always some pleasant person in my group who helped me.

Then I had a stroke of luck in the form of an accident. If that does not sound logical just read on. One fine day we were marched to a swampy area outside our camp. There stood a high tower from which a thick rope was stretched out over water till it reached the ground some distance away. In those days I had a terrible fear of height. My hands started sweating just looking at this contraption. To me that tower seemed a mile high, the water two miles wide and the end of the rope maybe a world away. On top of that, the instructions were announced over a bad loudspeaker system so again I needed assitance from my compatriots. At this point I had my regular "interpreters." They explained to me how we had to climb the tower and as fast as possible go down hanging on the rope hand over hand and land on the other side in the shortest time possible. They also said that, if you had any fear of heights you were excused from doing all that. I felt a little better about it until I saw one after another of our guys doing the exercise without any trouble. Could I possibly do this, too? I slinked farther and farther to the back until I was the very last one of the whole company. There was not one soul who had backed off. I did not want to be the only one to be chicken so when my turn finally came I bravely climbed the tower. I must have been very slow because everybody was cheering me on. I reached the top, sweating from top to bottom even though this took place in the middle of the winter. I grabbed the rope and there I was hanging by my sweaty hands. Then I made the cardinal mistake of looking down. The water seemed far, far below me. I went a few meters hand over hand, looked down again and then I looked to the end of the course and then I panicked. I froze. I could not move. I looked back to the tower but I knew I could not get back up there. After a short time I gave up. I can still feel the sensation I had. I did not care if I would die, I just let go. The water was not deep and the

rope probably was not very high, so when I landed I tried to roll and land back on my feet. Several men came over to help me up. I did not seem to be injured too badly. I only had a dull pain in my ankle. They walked me to the ambulance, which is always available at such an exercise, and they took me to the camp hospital. I stayed there overnight. The X-rays showed that I had a hairline fracture in my ankle, that was all. They sent me back to my unit with crutches and Ace bandages and with orders that I would be excused of all physical exercise and all duties! Did I ever have a good life for the remainder of my basic training, the last two months! No more marches, no more calestenics, K.P. duty or running. Three times a day I was taken to the hospital where I kept my foot in a wonderful whirlpool for a while. Never before had I seen such a thing and I certainly enjoyed it. I also liked the attention I got from my sergeant and commanding officers and everybody who saw me on crutches. My only fear was that I could not finish the basic training and that I would have to do it all over again. But my commander put my mind at ease. He said that I had already finished the theoretical training and most of the physical and that, if I could pass the markmanship test with the rifle I would be all right. So, I made sure that I would never miss when my group went to the rifle range. I was taken by jeep to the range, did my shooting and was driven back, like the Queen of England. So, I passed the final test with flying colors and I was officially a "marksman," whatever that meant. I was just lucky that my markmanship was never tested under combat conditions.

The highlight during those six months were the times which I spend with my girlfriend, soon to become my fiance. During the first several months she visited me in Virginia. She flew to Virginia, took a bus to the camp where she had just a few hours with me before she had to return to New York. But did we ever enjoy those rendezvous! She made me feel like a civilian again and we had so much fun just walking and talking.

For Christmas I got my first pass to leave the base for just two nights. I hitch-hiked to New York and spent the days there in her parents' house. That first evening, after dinner, her parents were in the kitchen and we were talking seriously for the first time about marriage. She definitely would wait for me and be faithful to me but we both preferred that we would get married before I had to go oversees, which was almost a sure thing. So, we drew up a plan whereby we would get married at the end of my basic training and before I would have to go to my assigned duty. I had no idea how that would work out with the Army, but that was our plan. Then I said to her that I would like to ask her parents for their permission and blessing to marry their daughter, in the old-fashioned way. She thought that it would be nice, so we called in her parents (we called them Etti and Pappa) and I formally asked them for permission to marry their only daughter. I was concerned that they might hesitate because I had no way of financially supporting her and my future was very insecure. But they agreed happily and we had a joyous time until I had to return to the base.

I went to work on our plans right away. I asked and received permission to talk to the chaplain. I needed a furlough for my honeymoon! What chutzpah! He explained that we would have to wait for my orders to see where I would be stationed. I pleaded with him. I explained my circumstances and that we had to arrange for a Rabbi and a service. Of course,

I did not tell him that we also had to arrange for our honeymoon. But he could not give a definite answer until he talked to my commanding officer.

After a few weeks my orders came in: Korea was to be in my future. I was not shocked at that news because everybody told me that at the height of the Korean war, the early months of 1953, mostly all new soldiers would be shipped to the war zone. But now our plans became more urgent. To make a long story short, it was not until Friday afternoon, three days before our hoped for wedding date, that I finally received my furlough papers for ten(!) days to get married. That gave us time for a honeymoon! I still do not know how Anita and her parents could get everything organised in such a short time. I could not leave until after the final Saturday morning pass-in-revue, so in the early afternoon I hitch-hiked to New York where I arrived late in the evening.

From then on it was so hectic that I remember only a few things of that period. On Sunday we could not do much except call everybody to announce our wedding on Tuesday, March 3rd, 1953 at 8pm. I do not even remember the name of the Synagogue. Monday was a big rush to get a suit for me and other last minute arrangements. I also needed a blood test and we had to sign some civil papers.

Tuesday evening everything was ready perfectly. There was no time for rehearsal so I had to wing it. This was no "short cut" wedding. This was "the works." Ettie and Pappa did not have much money and I did not have any. So they made a great sacrifice to give their daughter and me an unforgettable wedding.

Anita and I, wedding night, March 3, 1943.

At the appointed time a limousine pulled up for Ettie, Pappa, my bride and me. I had never been in a limousine. I was so impressed! I felt so important. When we arrived in the synagogue we were taken to a side room were the Ketuba (wedding contract) was signed. I was in a daze and I do not remember at all who the Rabbi or the witnesses were. Then we went into the sanctuary and we walked in following somebody's instruction. We stood under the chuppah (wedding canopy) and we said the proper blessings. I barely remember anything of that ceremony but from the pictures I know that a four year old Melody Amsel, one of Anita's nieces, was our flower girl and she looks like a doll in the pictures. My poor mother could not be there. We had been in touch with her but neither she nor we had the money to bring her over. So, Uncle Maurice and Aunt Lies gave me away and I believe that Jacques Swaab was the best man. We also had some lovely dressed bride's maids and Anita looked absolutely radiant. That was her big night. She deserved every beautiful minute of it. She and her parents performed a miracle in getting such a beautiful formal wedding together on such short notice. Later Anita told me that she had told the Rabbi and all the officials, guests and caterers and photographer to be ready for everything if all went according to plan! And everything went to perfection.

One thing stands out in my mind. The groom has to fast the entire day of the wedding and by the time the service was finished it was nine o'clock. So, I was extremely hungry and ready for a hardy meal. But first the photographer needed to take pictures in the sanctuary, re-enacting the ceremony because he was not allowed to take pictures during the ceremony. Then we had the reception line. We had eighty-five guests so that took a long time. Then he wanted to take more pictures: The bride and groom alone, with Ettie and Pappa, with Aunt and Uncle, with this one and that one. Well, I really was getting mad. I wanted to eat. Well, when I finally entered the dining room everybody was already sitting and eating. So I never saw the food tables set up. But the room was beautiful. All tables had pink damask table cloths with matching napkins and souvenir match books. Every table had a beautiful center piece. I had never seen anything so beautiful; it was like a scene from a Holywood movie and Anita and I were the stars.

I had barely eaten my fill when the photographer said that we had to start the dance. If I remember well we had just a violinist or maybe a pianist and a violinist. I do remember the lovely Jewish melodies this violinist played. And how I did my best to dance well. Then we were directed to each individual table for pictures with the guests. This was a little difficult for me because I hardly knew anybody there. These were all Anita's friends and relatives.

But all went well and I believe I made a good impression.

Towards the end of the activities we decided to leave. We wanted to leave before everyone else did so we would get a big send-off, and we did. Anita changed into a light beige suite and when she returned to the hall she was cheered loudly. When we finally left everybody clapped their hands and wished us well.

It really was a wonderful wedding, unforgettable. But I felt so relieved when we left all the excitement behind and the two of us, quietly and by ourselves, entered the taxi which took us to the first stage of our honeymoon, a night at the Biltmore Hotel! Wow! Here I was, just nine months after I had left Holland with my little brown suitcase and twenty-five guilders, and now, married and spending the first night with my bride in the famous Biltmore Hotel in New York. It was like a dream. We had an unforgettable first wedding night. Everything went well and we were happy like newly weds should be. The next morning we had breakfast in the room. Just like in the movies the bellboy brought in a tray loaded with coffee, juices, fresh fruit and covered containers with our eggs and toast. I had to pinch myself. I will never forget the amazing job Anita had done to arrange all this so quickly and so perfectly. I also have to add that she and her family paid for everything, including the diamond engagement ring, which my uncle had made, and the wedding rings. This was a major sacrifice for the Amsel family and I was in no position to help out financially.

After breakfast we took a cab to the airport. We spent our honeymoon in Bermuda! I was moving through all this in a daze. I enjoyed it all very much but it was as if I was observing someone else going through all this. We spent many hours walking and riding motorized bicycles around the Island. One day we went to see the famous lighthouse and we got to talking to the keeper of the lighthouse. When he heard that we were on our honeymoon he told us about a perfect spot to spend a day for honeymooners. He told us about an uninhabited little Island in the ocean with just a perfect little sheltered beach. We would have total privacy and he offered to take us there in the morning and pick us up late in the afternoon. We decided to accept without reservations. However, while returning to our hotel we brought up some doubts. Could we trust the guy? We did not know anything about him. What if he would leave us there? How would anybody find us? We decided to forget about all those concerns.

The next morning, at daybreak, we met the lighthouse keeper at the harbour. Where was his "boat"? He motioned us to a little dingy at the bottom of a dock and powered with a small outboard motor and, after we struggled our way in, we put-putted out of the harbor. Once we left the harbor he opened the throttle wide and we bounced over the waves like a toy boat. We almost fell backwards out of the boat! After about an hour we saw a little speck in the ocean which, he said, was to be our honeymoon spot for the next eight hours. As we came closer we did not see a beach, but only cliffs covered with tropical vegetation. Soon, after rounding a corner we noticed a tiny beach, probably no more that twenty by fifty feet. There he dropped us off and with a wave and a promise of a five o'clock pickup, he was gone.

There we were, all alone on an uninhabited tropical island. We shrugged off all concerns, changed into bathing suits and went for a nice swim. Needless to say, this was a wonderful day. How many people get such a chance? We felt so lucky! And we took full advantaqe of it. Around four o'clock we did become a little concerned. First of all, there was no shade and we were thoroughly baked. We had food and drinks but not enough water for such a long, warm day. And we started to wonder: might he forget us, or get busy and not show up till later in the evening. But this wonderful man re-appeared right on time. Were we relieved! What a memorable experience. We offered him money but he would not hear of it. He said it was a thrill and an honor to be able to do this for us.

We had put aside all thoughts of parting but soon this dream ended. We arrived back in New York and the following day Anita took me to the airport where we said a long and sad farewell. I was on my way to another new and entirely different kind of life.

Next -> CHAPTER 8: ~~THE KOREAN EXPERIENCE~~ IN TRANSIT

Return to INDEX

CHAPTER 8: ~~THE KOREAN EXPERIENCE~~ IN TRANSIT

My first destination was Fort Lewis in Tacoma, State of Washington. As soon as the plane landed in Seattle I knew that this was not going to be like a resort vacation. We were not at the regular civilian terminal but at some outlying area of the airport. The airline which had taken us there was Tiger Airlines. I had never heard of that airline before but later I frequently heard the name. Only military personnel was on that flight. We disembarked from a staircase. Then we were lined up in formation, in drenching rain, and marched to a convoy of army busses which took us to our base. It took a while to get there. It was raining so hard that we did not see much on the way.

The first impression of Fort Lewis was that this was a dreary dark grey base with no beauty to brag about. We never saw the main base where the headquarters were. We were directly taken to the site where troops in transit were kept. This area consisted of a flat terrain which was covered with black and dark grey stones. The only grass visible was around the non-descript two story barrack where we were to spend the next three weeks.

These three weeks were the most unpleasant weeks during my entire army time. What a contrast to the happy week of our honeymoon in sun-drenched Bermuda. In the first place, we were thrown together with soldiers from many different units from all over the United States and from Puerto Rico. We did not have any orders, so there was really nothing for us to do. Yet every day in the early morning hours we had to "fall out" in formation for roll call. Within five minutes we were sent back. Then we were called out again to be marched to an awful messhall where they served us a really bad breakfast. Here I learned what S.O.S. meant. It stood for "sh... on a shingle" and that is just what it looked like. Scrambled eggs were made from some powdered stuff and the cold cuts looked as if they gave us only the fat cut off from the good meat. Bread was so mushy that, with a little squeeze, it disappeared between our fingers. Even the cereals were nearly un-recogniseable. During my stay there I only ate toast and cheese, even for lunch and dinner. I will not even attempt to describe the quality of the latter meals. When I asked how anybody would want to spend his life in the military eating that stuff I was told that the regular outfits received better meals. This made me almost look forward to Korea.

After breakfast we were hustled back in formation again and marched to a field with a lot of rocks and boulders. We had to pick them up and put them in a pile. The next day we marched back to the same place and moved the pile to a different area. I was soon fed up with that. After all, we had finished our basic training and were now PFC's (Privates First Class)! So, a thought ocurred to me: nobody knew who we were and the cadres did not pay that much attention. So, I figured, they would never notice if you just would slip away. I also had noticed that they marched us in the same direction every morning and that we always made a right turn at the same spot. I was ready for my "big escape." I stayed all the way to the rear of the company and when we rounded the corner, I just turned around and walked into the opposite direction. I had told the young man next to me about my plan and he went along with me. I gave it no thought what could happen to us if we were caught. It

just felt good that we were free from our daily "rock-duty."

But, there we were, two inexperienced soldiers on the large base with nothing to do. Everybody else in sight was walking or marching somewhere. We had to get ourselves busy but with what? Then it occurred to me that there should be a library where we could spend the day reading in comfort. We were afraid to ask but after walking around for a while we saw some street signs and one directed us to the library. When we arrived there we stood in front of a Dutch-brick building. The door was locked. After a little hesitation I rang the doorbell. To our great consternation an officer with a "bird" on one side of his shoulder and a cross on the other side, the chaplain, opened the door. We thought we were caught. I already saw myself court-marshalled when the officer said with a smile; "Ah, you are the fellows who are going to assist me in the library?" "Yes, Sir!!", we answered quickly. Were we relieved. He invited us in and asked us if we were familiar with filing books in a library. I had never even been in a large library. Well, he explained to us the system and for the rest of the day we were stocking books from boxes onto the shelves. During the rest of our stay at Ft. Lewis we went there every day. Every morning we marched out at the rear of our company and every morning we turned around when our compatriots rounded the corner. I have no idea what happened to the soldiers who were supposed to have reported for our work. We were never caught and so it worked out just fine. We spent the following three weeks in this most pleasant way.

Most of the days it was raining with the result that we never saw the beautiful mount Rainier which was supposed to be in easy view from the camp. On weekends we got a pass to go into town. The first weekend I hitch-hiked to Tacoma. In those days I had no fear of hitch-hiking. I was lucky the very first time. A large truck stopped. The man even apologized because his truck was not very fancy. I did not mind and I was quite impressed with the size of the truck which was pulling a large trailer. On the way to Tacoma we had a nice conversation. He must have liked me because he invited me for the following weekend to his family for an Indian smoked salmon dinner and for fishing the following morning. I was delighted because I thought that smoked salmon was what I knew as "lox." Was I in for a surprise.

The following Saturday afternoon he was waiting for me at the appointed time at the base and drove me to his house in the outskirts of Tacoma. It was raining cats and dogs, yet I was able to appreciate the beauty of the surroundings. When we entered the house it was warm and cozy but there was a strong smell in the air. I soon found out that it was the salmon which had been smoked and prepared by Indians and it was anything but the lox I expected to eat. I ate it politely even though I did not care for the taste or the smell. After dinner we had a nice evening but we broke up early because we had to rise early. "The best time for fishing," I was told. I thought that we rose early in the army but this was nothing compared to what was waiting for me. My fisherman friend woke me up and it was still pitch black. I do not remember the time but it could not have been any later than five o'clock. Half asleep I worked my way downstairs where my mentor threw me a heavy poncho to put over my military uniform. "This will keep you warm and dry." Well, I needed it. Even in the dark I

could see the rain coming down in sheets. I quickly pulled myself into the cab of the truck while my partner was loading up a little row boat. And off we went. I do not know how he could see where he was going. After a seemingly endless time we left the paved road and bounced on a dirt road for another interminable time. Finally the truck came to a halt and I was told to get out and help him to put the boat into the water. Now, you must know that I had never been in a row boat, neither did I have any experience with fishing. Before I knew it we were bobbing on the water in the pouring rain. "Best fishing weather," my friend told me again. I would not know. I just was miserable. At daybreak I looked around from under my dripping poncho hood. We were in the middle of nowhere. I saw nothing but water around us which in the distance met the sky which was the same dark grey color as the water. My avid fishing partner put a pole in my hand and told me to put a bait on the hook. When he saw my startled look he realised that I was not the champion fisherman he had hoped for, so he put a worm on the hook for me and showed me how to throw it out over the water. My feeble attempt did not get very far. And so we spent the entire day sitting in that little row boat in the middle of a lake, out of sight of land and in a torrential downpour. At lunch time (I had no idea about time under those conditions) he opened a lunch box and handed me a soggy sandwich and some hot coffee. The coffee I really appreciated. Late in the afternoon we went home. He had caught a bucket full of good-sized fish; I had caught none. He must have had a good laugh telling his friends about the G.I. he took fishing. His wife prepared the fish and this time I did like it. Late in the evening he took me back to the base. He invited me for the following weekend again but I found an excuse and thanked him very much for the lovely weekend I had had. It was an experience I'll never forget. I never fished the rest of my life but I always remember that weekend in March whenever I see someone fishing.

Finally my orders came for the permanent assignment and it was in Korea with the 25th division Engineers. I do not remember the precise date but it must have been somewhere around the second week in April, 1953. I was barely twenty-three years old. I had arrived from Holland some ten months earlier and here I stood lined up in the harbor in front of an enormous troop transport ship. I was told that it was a retrofitted French cruise ship, so it shoud be very nice. However, it was far from luxurious. We marched single file up the gang plank with our heavy duffel bags on our backs and our rifles on our shoulders and steel helmets on our heads. Mine kept sliding to one side of my head. I must have been quite a sight. When we reached the deck we were immediately directed down the steps to the bottom decks of the ship. To me it seemed like the dungeons: there were no portholes, just artificial, dim lights. We entered a large open area where bunks were lined up four high along narrow aisles. I did not know if it was good or bad but I ended up on the lower bunk. I tried to figure out how to crawl into this "bed" with barely any space for a person, leave alone all the equipment. I had just thrown my rifle and duffle bag on the bunk when I heard an announcement over the loudspeaker system. This time I could understand what was said. The chaplain was asking for volunteers for different jobs, " this and that and the library.....and." My ears perked up. I left everything behind and ran up the steps to the main deck. "Quick, where is the chaplain's office?" I did not want to miss this opportunity. I imagined a long line of soldiers waiting for an interview for this great opportunity. With

some help I found him and to, my surprise, I was the only one there. I started to relax. The chaplain asked if I had any experience in running a library. Well, I did, of course. After all I had worked in the library at the base just before I was transported to this ship. Now, that is what is called "chutzpah." I got the job and it was even better than I had expected. The chaplain said that, if I preferred, I could sleep in a room behind the library. Wow, did I prefer that! He asked if I wanted an assistant but I said that I preferred to work alone. Of course I did not tell him that I was concerned that my assistance might know a lot more about libraries than I did. And so, within an hour after arriving at the ship I brought bag and baggage up to my private quarters which were small but a lot more comfortable than the bunkbed below in the hull of the ship. I even had my private shower and heating and cooling system. And I was not over-worked; the G.I.'s were too busy playing poker and other games, so I only saw an occasional officer who wanted to read a book. Life in the army was good to me! At least, so far. I missed my bride but, while still in the harbor, I was able to call her (from the library!) and tell her about my lucky break.

Next -> CHAPTER 9: MY ADVENTURES IN KOREA

Return to INDEX

CHAPTER 9: MY ADVENTURES IN KOREA

The weeks on the ocean were un-eventful but not unpleasant for me. I ate with the officers, so I finally had some decent meals. The few stormy days we had did not bother me but I did miss seeing land for so long. Finally, after several weeks, we reached the "Yellow Sea." I know now why they called this the Yellow Sea: the entire area had a light brown look from the silt which came from the rivers of China.

It took several more days until we finally saw land. I was very excited when we landed in Yokohama harbor. Here I was. less than a year ago I had still been working at the Philips Import-Export office in Eindhoven and now I was setting foot on Japanese soil. My first impression of Japan was that of an industrious country. This sounds funny now as Japan is a leader in industrial production but in the spring of 1953 Japan was just recovering from WW II and the damage was very visible, especially in Yokohama. But people were rushing around. Everybody seemed well-dressed and busy from early morning until late at night. As a matter of fact we saw construction going on throughout the night under artificial lights.

I do not remember how long we stayed in Japan. I do remember walking in the main streets downtown. But before long we were on our way to an airport where a gigantic troop transport plane was waiting for us. The wingspan was enormous and the back opened up into a gaping hole large enough to load tanks, jeeps and armored vehicles. Two gangplanks, which looked from a distance like two match sticks, were lowered and, after everything was loaded, we were marched into a cavernous two-story high compartment. Inside were many rows of seats made out of canvas straps on which we were placed. We were given instructions how to strap ourselves in and here we sat, shoulder to shoulder, hundreds of GI's with their duffelbags and rifles squeazed somewhere under and between our legs. It was highly uncomfortable and we were not looking forward to the flight which, we were told, would last at least four and a half hours. The plane, the "Flying Boxcar" as it was called, started down the runway with a deafening roar. It shook and creaked and I was sure that it could not get off the ground but, after a long arduous time, it did. I was lucky to be able to see out of a little window. It climbed so slowly that it seemed to me to go backwards. When it eventually reached the required height it seemed to stand still but little by little I saw Japan disappearing and we flew for several hours over water. Most soldiers by now were fast asleep. I cannot sleep while traveling, even now, so I just sat there staring at the water below. Occasionally I could notice a ship but mostly I saw just the grey sea and grey sky. Before we landed we were given a lunchbox with some un-edibles. I only ate the crackers and cheese and chocolate bar.

After many hours we arrived outside of Pusan on the southern coast of South Korea. Luckily it did not rain because they lined us up in formation on the tarmac and let us wait there for a long time until trucks came to take us to the train depot. It was pitch black when we arrived there. Because it was war time all the lights were blackened. Only little slits of the truck lights gave us some help in moving around the area. We were not allowed to light a cigarette because the enemy might notice the troop movement. I got the incorrect impression that out

there in the dark, we were surrounded by enemies. What did I know? We stood there for a very long time. Little by little we were loaded onto the train and seated on hard wooden benches, four on each bench. It was crowded and stuffy and smelly (we did not have a shower for more than twenty-four hours), so we were looking forward to the train to get moving. Well, they did not seem to be in a hurry because we stood there for several hours. Finally we left. The train moved slowly, very slowly. I will never understand, why. It just crawled. Officers came around with instructions: no smoking, no flashlights and, if we were attacked, we had to lie flat on the floor. And, oh yes, we all got another lunch (dinner?) box with the same food as we had on the plane. I was hungry but I could not see myself eating half the stuff they gave us. I was very popular with the guys around me because I gave them nearly all there was.

The trip was endless. For hours we crawled in the dark, in this noisy, squeaky train, with nothing to do or see. Every few hours the train came to a creeking halt and stood still for a while before it started to crawl forward again. All we knew was that we were going North and with all these hours we kept going we thought that we might end up in the middle of North Korea. After many hours, close to the morning, we heard cannon and machine gun fire and we all fell to the floor. Soon the officers came around and told us that the firing was not directed at us (thank G'd) and that we could sit up again.

Finally we reached another train depot. It was dark again and by the little light from the trucks we loaded up to be taken to a processing area. It was an eery feeling. It was still fairly dark when, after several hours, we drove into a valley surrounded on all sides by treeless mountains. I thought that, by now, we must already be in North Korea. Not so. We were told to make ourselves comfortable under an enormous canopy, large enough to hold all the soldiers from the train. We spent the whole day there without getting any orders. It was boring and nerve-wrecking as we heard occasional machine gun fire, not very far away, which was answered by a more distant firing. But after a while we settled down. There were field showers for us and that was a new experience for me. There was plenty of water, but one moment it was ice-cold and the next minute scalding hot. It was a real adventure just to wash and rinse and not get hurt.

At dusk the shooting activity increased and by nightfall it sounded like a free-for-all. On the American side a machine gunner started his activity with a rythmic salvo after which he gave it his all. Then the answer came from the other side and we saw the tracers going over our heads. After a short while the big guns started from both sides. We were surrounded by mountains and safely situated in the valley. But the firing came from both sides of the mountains. It was a constant sound of booms and rattata's. Some of my companions were getting very nervous. When it was completely dark our valley was lit up by the constant firing, very much like the continuous lightning of a severe thunder storm and the noise became deafening. As it became late I decided to go to sleep. It probably was because of my previous war experience that I was fairly calm and I thought that I probably would need the energy of a good night sleep the following morning. It was not the most comfortable place to sleep. We were still situated under that giant canopy. There were no beds or any

conveniences so the ground was my mattrass and the duffelbag my pillow. I also kept my M-1 rifle loaded with a round in the chamber, just in case of an attack. I do not know if that was the proper way but I felt more secure. I did get some sleep even though I woke up many times during the night. The firing went on until the early morning and by daylight it became quiet again. This was my first experience with live enemy fire. Luckily it was not directed at us.

After breakfast we received our orders. I was assigned to an engineering outfit as a typist (remember how experienced I was in typing?!). A jeep picked me and a couple of other G.I.'s up and soon we were leaving the safety of the valley and entering the open road. It was a dirt road full of muddy ruts. We passed by a train depot, probably where we had arrived the previous day. There we saw many Army ambulances and jeeps which brought wounded and dead soldiers to be transported to the appropriate places. It was not a pretty sight. In spite of my WW II experience I had never seen any wounded or dead victims. It shook me up quite a bit. I was relieved when we worked our way past that mass of vehicles and continued on our way along rice paddies and farms. These did not look anything like the farms I knew from Holland or the U.S. The rice paddies looked like miniature lakes and the farm fields looked like little patches of rough sand and mud. And did it smell! Our driver explained to us that the Koreans used human fertilizer and he warned us not to eat anything raw if offered by a Korean. It never occurred to me that I might have contact with Korean civilians but I soon found out that we did.

After a long arduous and bumpy ride we arrived at a compound surrounded by rolls of barbed wire. We entered through some kind of a gate where a guard challenged the driver who knew the secret watch word. We drove into a very small area with just one large tent surrounded by four or five tents. This was a different world, an army different from the one I was used to. In the first place, nobody looked particularly sharp or even neat and officers walked among enlisted men without being saluted. Everybody seemed friendly enough. We were taken to the officer's tent. He looked as if he had just come out of Westpoint except for his casual fatigues (Army work uniform). I came to attention and saluted him but he said right away: "At ease, soldier" and he explained that it was not necessary to salute officers in the compound because they were walking around the area all day long and it would be too much of a bother. He told me what my duties would be, which included guard duty but not K.P. My main occupation was just typing. "So far so good" I thought. Then he went into security arrangements. I had to get acquainted with the area surrounding the compound. We were relatively safe there because we were situated in a neutral triangle, just south of the demarcation line, near Panmunjon. There were no fighting units allowed inside that triangle, which was not very large. There was some understanding that we would never be attacked but you could never know when the North Koreans or the Chinese Army would violate that agreement. So, we always wore our steel helmets and carried our M1 rifles outside our tents. That rifle became pretty heavy after a while and so did the steel helmet. I never managed to keep it all neat and in the proper place.

And so I started my new career in the army, another new lifestyle. It took me a while to get

adjusted but after a few days I got used to it. Even my typing improved after a while, though I still kept typing with just four fingers (I still do that). We had a certain routine of work with many breaks and a lot of joking and talking during work hours. And we had long lunches. There was no mess hall. We were served food on our small tin canteen plates and cups which, after eating, we dipped into two barrels , one with soapy hot water and the next with boiling clear water. I never learned how to do all that with the rifle slung over my shoulder. It kept slipping off and the steel helmet frequently landed on the ground. I think that I was not shaped properly for the Army. We slept in tents which were placed on the soil which often was muddy after a heavy rain. In the tent was a dim light, a stove and eight bunks on which we slept. At the foot of each bed was a footlocker in which we kept our meager belongings and, when we were in the tent, we hung our rifles under the bed. Nights were very cold and I often slept in my fatigues curled up inside a sleeping bag and an army blanket. Only my nose stuck out. It was hard to get out of that warm bag when we had guard duty. We were then unceremoniously awakened, put on our heavy, fur-lined parkas and thermal boots. Then the sergeant of the guard marched us to the guard tent and assigned us to our post and gave us our secret password which was changed every night. We pulled guard four hours on and four hours off. During our off-hours we had to stay in the guard tent and try to catch some sleep before we were awakened for our second four-hour round. Once, late at night, a jeep approached my post and I challenged the passengers. They gave the correct password and when they drove by me I recognised our commanding officer. I felt embarrased but he gave me a compliment for doing my duty. I could never become a good soldier.

There was the problem of the alerts. We were never told if the alert was for training purposes or if there was a real threat. We had to carry heavy machine guns and mortars out of the compound, drag all that equipment with ammunition boxes and our trustworthy rifle up a steep hill and assemble it all as quickly as possible and get into firing positions. I was lucky that we never were attacked during my stay there because I never managed to get it all in place before the "all clear" was announced and we had to dis-assemble the whole lot. I hate to think what could have happened to me in a real attack, especially with my helmet rolling down the hill. Everybody got a good laugh from my antics. Needless to say, we had to keep our weapons sparkling clean and I still needed help re-assembling them. But everybody took it all in good spirit and I got the necessary help.

The evenings were spent outside watching movies. Our "movie-theatre" was a sandy or, after a rain, a muddy field. We had a different movie every night. Everybody sat on a full case of beer, brought in from the PX at headquarters, which would be empty before the movie ended. I never got into that habit and I must say that, during my one and a half year stint in Korea, I was one of the few who did not drink or swear. Needless to say, I was the butt of a lot of jokes but I did not mind that because I was very much accepted by my peers. It always was done in good fun.

The highlight for us was the daily mail call. Anita was just wonderful. She wrote me nearly every day. Very soon after I arrived she wrote me in a letter that she thought that she was

pregnant. Soon that was confirmed in another letter and after that she often sent me pictures of herself so I could follow the progress. Of course I shared the news with my confreres who celebrated the occasion with an extra case of beer and many toasts. Anita always kept me informed of the changes in her and the progress of the baby growing inside of her. I appreciated that very much.

One day while talking to a sergeant, I mentioned that I played the flute. He was surprised to hear that they had not assigned me to a band. I did not know that there was a band in the combat zone in the middle of a war, but the sergeant explained that this was done for the morale of the troops and that the band often played for different occasions. Then he said that, if the band needed a flutist, I would instantly be transferred to the band which was based at the 25th division headquarters, some fifteen miles south of the front line. Well, that sounded good to me, so I asked for an interview with the band commander. That sergeant helped me immensely. The next morning I got a pass to leave our compound and the sergeant took me to the headquarters in a jeep. After about an hour of being shaken up on the dirt roads we arrived at headquarters. Well, to me it looked like heaven on earth. I had not seen anything like that since I had left the States some three months earlier. There were real, albeit dirt streets lined with lawns and neat tents and large quonset huts all on wooden floors! Army buses were hustling about and trucks and jeeps. There were stop-signs! Wow, like a real city. I was impressed. And here we did have to salute the officers, and there seemed to be a lot of them. Soon we arrived at one of the quonset huts. The sergeant dropped me off and I entered the band rehearsal hall. The band leader was a warrant officer. He was very nice and encouraging. He wanted to hear me play the flute. Well, my flute was in New York, a million miles and a life style away. So, he gave me somebody's flute and I played some scales for him and one of my favorite flute soloes. He wanted to know if I also played the piccolo. I told him I did, although I had never in my life had a piccolo in my hands. He asked me some questions about my background and then we parted with an "I'll let you know."

Early the next morning, my commanding officer came to my tent and handed me my orders: bag and baggage as soon as possible for transfer to the 25th Division Band! I never got ready so fast in my entire life. After lunch a jeep took me back to headquarters where the warrant officer greeted me with open arms. They sure needed a flutist; I was the only one there for the next sixteen months. He personally took me to the headquarter's supply sergeant where I received dress-fatigues and dress uniforms, helms and boots. Everything had to be custom fitted, so a Korean taylor took my measurements. I never expected anything like that. Then I had to turn in my rifle and instead I received a lightweight carbine and a fancy light helmet, beautifully colored with the 25th division colors and insignia and fancy belts and belt buckles. I sure felt like someone special. They gave me new boots and music stands and pouches and even new and better canteens from which to eat. Then I was taken to my tent. It had a wooden floor and frame! No more sleeping in the mud! We had less soldiers in each tent and we had cabinets for our instruments and music. We did have to pull guard duty but not as frequently. The band area was situated in a beautiful corner of the division headquarters alongside a lovely creek.

This was the new life I started and lived for the following sixteen months. It was a more relaxed and comfortable routine. We were awakened much later and the day was taken up mostly with rehearsals and time for individual practice. The latter was a lot of fun because some of the musicians in the band were excellent jazz musicians. It was a privilege to hear them practice and rehearse. The drummer would practice different rolls and combinations for hours and there was one trumpet player who could improvise for a long time on one theme. They tried to get me interested in forming a combo of flute, drums, trombone and trumpet but I could never become familiar with the rythm necessary for jazz. I and a French-horn player were the only ones with a classical background. We had two conductors: the warrant officer for classical music and concerts and a master sergeant for jazz and marching music. For the marches they needed a piccolo and, as you may remember, I had told the warrant officer that I could play that instrument as well. I quickly made a call to Anita to send me a book to study the piccolo, which she did. There is not much difference between playing the flute and the piccolo so I caught on very quickly although I always had trouble with fast passages. The keys of a piccolo are so close together that my fingers got in each other's way. But somehow I got by. I enjoyed the weekly Saturday morning "Pass in Revue" parade routines with the inspections. First we would parade several times around the grounds playing different marches. The shrill sound of the piccolo drew a lot of attention. It seemed that they had not heard that for a while. Then we would stand to the side and play soft waltz music for the inspection. I could never figure out why waltzes were needed for military inspections but that is how it was. After that we played some concert music, sometimes a classical arrangement, sometimes jazz and sometimes, my favorite, Braodway musicals and film music.

In dress uniform. Korea, 1953-1954.

I mentioned that I "quickly " called Anita. In reality I only started the call as soon as I could. The procedure for making a call from an army base in Korea was very long and tedious and you needed special permission which was not given easily. The telephone was more like a field radio with a little crank which connected us from division headquarters to I-Corps headquarters which then connected us to the Army headquarters in Seoul or Pusan and then

finally, via Japan to the States. Needless to say that this took quite a while and sometimes they sent me back to the band and called me back later when the connection was finally made.

Now I started a new and more pleasant life again. We had to spend a lot of time keeping our uniforms, shoes and helmets in "spitting" clean and shining condition but even that was made easy for us. We had a Korean house-boy! We each gave a little money, I do not remember how much but it was a small amount, and this house-boy cleaned and shined our boots and washed and ironed all our clothes and kept our tent in good order. Now that was a new experience for me. I never had that luxury before or after. Only the carbines he was not allowed to touch. That was too bad because I still needed help with assembling my weapon. In the evening he often told us about his family, in broken English, and he taught us a few famous and beautiful Korean songs.

On December 6th 1953, I was called to see the warrant officer. He handed me a telegram from New York: I was the proud father of a healthy baby boy. I was shaking with excitement and I did not know what to do or say. I was overcome with emotion. I asked if it would be possible to get a furlough to see my wife and son but that was impossible. However he offered me the opportunity to make a call directly from the band officer's tent to my wife. This seemed to me a miracle. This telephone was a battery operated and hand cranked field phone. I was overcome with emotion when I heard the voice of my wife for the first time in nearly five months. Tears still come to my eyes when I remember that emotional moment. We talked only for a short time but it was a tremendous morale booster. I was up in the clouds when I returned to my tent where I was greeted with a loud ovation; the news had spread throughout the band compound. It was not easy to return to the reality of Army life.

A while later, around Christmas time, we went all the way North to the frontline to play for the G.I.'s who were guarding the area near Panmunjong at the 38th parallel, which later became the armistice line. We arrived there after dark and entered the base after many security checks. The boys were extremely appreciative of our performance of Christmas carols and some jazz and marches. They had been stuck there for months without any entertainment or change of scene. After the concert we had some coffee and refreshments. Suddenly we heard a female voice with a strong Korean accent speaking over a loudspeaker. "G.I.'s, wouldn't you like to be home with your loved ones and have a Christmas dinner with your wives and children. Don't you want to put your arms around your girlfriends? Tell your commander that you want to be home for New Year, etc." And so it went on for some ten or fifteen minutes. The fellows just laughed and shrugged it all off. This was the Korean version of Tokyo Rose trying to break the morale of the troops. It almost seemed ridicuously simplistic but it did have some effect on me. I had not heard a female voice for many months. But soon this passed too and we had a good time there. We were told that they had gone through this experience many times before. It had little or no effect on them.

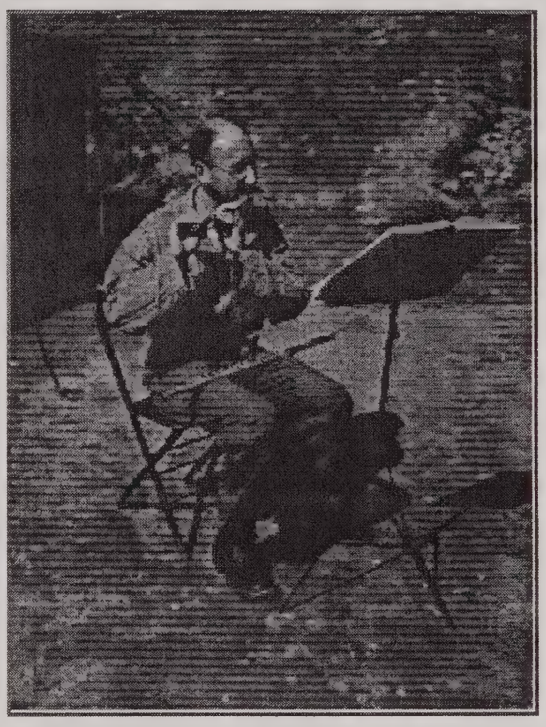
Frequently we got orders in the morning or in the afternoon just before we had to give a

concert. There was a lot of preparation for these occasions. We had to shine our shoes (spitting shine!) and make sure our ceremonial uniform helmet and pouches were in top shape. Then we loaded all the equipment, instruments and ourselves into Army trucks. We frequently played in Korean villages after a school was opened, built by the American Army. That was a very unusual experience. Korea at that time, in 1953-1954, was still very primitive. The roads were all dirt or mud roads, depending on the weather. Either way it was no fun. If it was dry and hot the dust would blow into the open trucks which took us to the villages and cover us from top to toe. When we arrived in the village we immediately jumped off the trucks and cleaned ourselves the best way we could. Most villages did not even have water for us to wash ourselves. The Koreans were still dressed in their traditional outfits, the women in billowing white dresses, often with bare breasts, and the men in ballooning pantaloons and loose shirts. They would crowd around us, stare at us and clap loudly after each piece of music. Then officials gave their speeches, in Korean, and we would be cheered some more. Afterwards the Koreans had a picnic and they often offered us something to eat or drink. As we had been warned about serious consequences of eating that food, because of their poor hygiene and the human fertiliser they used, we of course declined. They were always friendly and courteous. Sometimes they danced for us the lovely Korean folk dances and sang the songs we had learned from our house-boy. Needless to say that I always took both my movie camera and my 35mm camera with me and that I took a lot of pictures and movies. These are now priceless memories of the old Korea. I understand that these narrow dirt roads are now four-lane divided highways and that the old villages, where fish used to be dried on top of the straw roofs, have now skyscrapers and high-rise apartment buildings.

Our favorite village was Vijombu. I believe that this was a district capitol. It was a lovely but primitive town with only dirt roads lined with little huts. The foul smell of natural fertilizer and drying fish greeted us from afar before we reached our destination. But the villagers were wonderful and appreciative of our performances. They lined the streets and greeted us with smiles and hand waving. We played there more often than anywhere else.

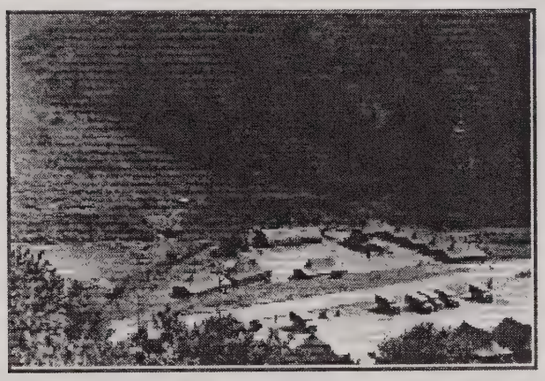
One day we were sent to a place in the far outlying area of the district. I do not remember the name of that village. But I remember a beautiful mountainous area surrounding the hamlet. It was green and covered with trees. This may not sound unusual to you but for us it was an unusual sight. Most mountains in our area were denuded from the constant bombardments and most of the valleys had lost their greenery after many fires. To us it was a real treat. I asked and received permission to hike into the hills and take some pictures. I made sure that I kept the band in sight so I would not get lost. One of the band members accompanied me. We discovered an old graveyard with a couple of beautiful monuments. There I took several pictures one of which became my favorite: my companion took a photo of me leaning against one of the stone sculptured monuments. I always sent all my film to Anita and this picture was included in an article in a New York newspaper which interviewed Anita as a young mother with an infant whose father was in the Armed services in Korea.

Before the birth of my first child Anita sent me pictures showing her ever expanding body and after the birth of our firstborn, Mark Edmond Groenewoudt (that was still my official last name), she sent me pictures almost every week so I could follow the progress Mark was making. That was wonderful of her because it made me feel that I was part of a family. She also wrote me long letters daily with all the exciting things happening to our little, but fast growing, infant. She also included me in all the decision making, although sometimes solutions could not wait for an answer through the slow mail. But throughout the remainder of my stay in Korea I felt very much that I was partaking in the development of our child. Needless to say, I shared the pictures and all the latest developments with my buddies in the band.



"Piccolo Pete" in Korea, rehearsal time. Around June 1953.

My last name gave a lot of people a problem: on the one hand they could not pronounce it when they read my name and on the other they did not understand when I had to report somewhere and give my name. In the band they came up with a clever solution. There was a popular tune in the early fifties in which the name "Piccolo Pete" occurred. So, as I played the piccolo as well as the flute, more and more band members started to call me Piccolo Pete or just Piccolo or more often just Pete. I am sure that most of them only knew me by these names. It did not bother me. As a matter of fact, I considered it a complement because they tried to adjust my name to make it more user-friendly.



25th Division Band area, Korea, 1953/54.
My tent was third one from top right.

One night, while I was pulling guard duty, it started to pour. Within a short time little rivulets formed around the band area. I was not too uncomfortable in my thermal boots and winter parka, so I walked around the compound. When I came to our little stream behind our tents I saw that it was fairly swollen. So, I decided to keep an eye on it. In a very short time it started to approach the banks and I realized that it would not be long before water would go over the banks and flood the band area. I quickly woke up the sergeant on duty and then our commanding officer. We had to make small dikes around our area. Of course, I was still on guard duty, so I just overlooked the scene while the others were working hard in the drenching rain! Soon after that I received my one and only promotion: I became a corporal! To me it felt like I was promoted to general. I felt very important.

The climate in Korea was not always very pleasant. During the summer it was humid and brutally hot. In the winter it was dry but very cold, often below 0" F. And in between was the rainy season. During the latter it could pour steadily for weeks. Often our tents were full of water. The worst part of this was our guard duty. Even though it was a much lighter routine than in the Engineer company, the weather made it very difficult. The winter nights were horrid. We did have excellent clothing; our parkas were lined with real fur and we had thermal boots which kept our feet warm, although sweaty. But it was uncomfortable. One night, while pulling my four hour shift of guard duty, I felt a cramp in one leg. I tried to walk it away but it seemed that the cold air and the heavy, sweaty thermal boots made it worse. Finally, I collapsed. I dragged myself to the guard tent where the sergeant in charge called in a relief guard for me. I was helped back to my tent where I tried to rest and sleep. The next morning I could not put weight on my left leg. It just buckled and it was very painful. Soon I received my orders for my transfer to a hospital. A jeep took me there. I do not remember where this hospital was but it was far away from the front line. It was not a field hospital but a regular, brick building. This description sounds superfluous but, believe me, that after many months in tents and quonset huts in dust and mud and seeing only soldiers in uniform or Koreans in their primitive outfits, it was quite a change to

Koreans in their primitive outfits, it was quite a change to see a normal hospital building and doctors and nurses in civilian clothes. I stayed there only a few days. They put me in traction and I received some physical therapy. And finally they made arch supports for me! The lack of these was the cause of my problem. I always had problems with my feet and needed arch supports. This was not entered in my original induction records. Here is an example of a bad thing ending with positive results. The hospital visit was entered into my permanent records. During the rest of my life I received many benefits because of this mishap. I will write about that later. After a week the pain disappeared and I could function normally again. Nevertheless, I received orders that I would be excused from pulling guard or going on long marches. I had no argument with that order! It made life easier for me.

Korea, Winter 1953.

By this time I had settled down to a pleasant routine in the band. We had a large Quonset hut where we did our rehearsals. There was plenty of free time for private music practice and reading. The house boys took care of all the hard work and we had a change of routine whenever we had to give concerts or play for parades or for visiting dignitaries. One of these was General Mark Clark who at that time was the commander- in- chief of the armed forces in Korea. Needless to say, I took plenty of pictures of all these events.

Once a fire broke out in the hills surrounding our camp. Everybody was called out to help and form a water brigade. Instead of joining them I picked up my cameras and ran around in the opposite direction and took some dramatic scenes. I am still surprised that I was not court-marshaled for dis-obeying orders, especially since several small Korean hamlets burnt to the ground. I think that, by now, I was known as that crazy guy with a camera around his neck. Later we played concerts for these villages after the US Army helped restore them. Every once in a while we played in a village where a new school, built with the help of our Army, was opened. This was a major event for the villagers and every one in the surrounding area came to hear our presentation. Flower girls presented flowers to the division commander and speeches were made, some in broken English but most in their native language. Again, I took many pictures of these village scenes, which are now priceless. And so my life was full of adventures.

One day in April 1954 I received orders to go to Seoul to receive my naturalization papers. For months already I had been asking when I would receive my American citizen papers which were promised to me when I was sworn into the American Army. So, finally the day was here, one of the most important days in my life: I became an American citizen. It all happened with little fanfare. A jeep took me to Seoul, several hours, mostly on dirt roads, from our Headquarters. Seoul was at that time already a large city. It had large, wide paved streets, (something I had not seen in a year!) and a few high-rise buildings. Soon we arrived at our appointed place, a beautiful palace with lovely gardens. I took many pictures of the

area until I was called in for the naturalization ceremony. I was worried that they would ask me history questions but everything was very easy. An officer only asked me what democracy was and that I knew. Then I went to a room where I was sworn in. I had expected to see more people there but I was the only one. Just before I took the oath the officer asked if I wanted to change my name officially. I was so lucky that he thought of it because with all the excitement I had forgotten all about the difficulty my Dutch name was giving everybody. He probably could not figure out my last name, therefore the suggestion. So, I said:" yes and please change it from 'Groenewoudt' to 'Greenwood', thank you, sir". He asked if I did not want to change my first name, too. I could not understand why. Then he explained that, officially, my name was registered as "Freddy" (thanks to my friendly and easy-going father) and he gave me the opportunity to change that to "Fred." I followed his suggestion and so my name became officially Fred Samson Greenwood. I walked out of that palace a different person: I was now a U. S. Citizen and a proud one at that. I immediately called Anita before returning to our base. It was a lot easier calling from a normal phone in a regular city. When I returned to the band I was greeted with a lot of applause and congratulations.

Soon after that the fighting in Korea came to an end: on ~~May~~ July 1954 all parties signed a truce agreement, with the troops staying at the 38th parallel, at the same point where ~~half a year~~ approximately earlier we had played our Christmas concert for the soldiers. Life became easier for us now. Improvements were made in our living quarters. We received new tents with better wooden floors and wooden frame and a door frame for the entrance. Pure luxury for us! We also started giving more concerts farther away from our base and we were more entertained by USO shows from the US. One day we found out that Marylin Monroe would visit the 25th Division Headquarters and give a concert for the troops and that our band would accompany her! Believe me, that was a highlight in our otherwise dreary existence.

When that day arrived I was ready with my 35mm camera and my movie camera. We were told to stay at our compound but when the helicopters approached the small landing strip not far from our band area, I quickly ran to the field where the helicopters were landing. In the band I already was accepted as "the photographer" and with all that camera equipment hanging around my neck the military guard at the landing strip probably thought that I was an official press photographer. Anyway, they never questioned me and so I got some outstanding pictures of Marylin Monroe landing and getting out of her helicopter. Was she ever so beautiful. She wore Army fatigue jeans and a flight jacket but she looked as glamorous as if she were dressed in a beautiful evening gown. That night we played at the concert and I must admit, that I spent more time taking pictures than playing the flute. I had both my 35 millimeter camera and my movie camera on my lap, ready for action pictures. Sometimes I wonder how I got away with all these things I did, but somehow I was never reprimanded. And so I have some priceless pictures and movies of Marylin Monroe. The next day when she left I again left the band without asking permission and ran alongside her jeep constantly taking pictures. At one point her jeep stopped and she blew a kiss at me which I caught on movie film. Maybe she recognized this crazy GI with all the cameras constantly hanging around his neck.

I was now already a year in Korea and I was sent on R & R (Rest and Recuperation) for a week to Japan. This was a wonderful change. I stayed in Yokohama and did my share of sightseeing and shopping. It was very different from the surroundings in which I had been living for such a long time. I did not quite know what to do with my time, so I spent most of it at the USO club. One night I went with some GIs to a bar but I felt very much out of place. I was not a drinker and the waitresses were rather aggressive and spent much of their time sitting on the laps of the GI's. I did not feel at ease with that. So, the following day I decided to take a tour to an Island where we saw a beautiful Japanese temple with a large Buddha in front of it. I also toured the large Yokohama harbor which I found very interesting. It reminded me somewhat of the days I had spent in the harbor of Rotterdam when I had worked for the Dutch government.

I was very impressed with the activity of the Japanese people. The Koreans, especially the farmers with whom we mostly had contact, were very laid back. By contrast, the Japanese always seemed to be busy and in a hurry to get things done. They were mostly well dressed and properly polite. We saw a lot of construction and many busy stores. A few months later I went on my second R.& R., this time to Tokyo, and I also enjoyed that thoroughly. I had now more experience with travel in Japan, so I did mostly sightseeing. I was lucky that I was there on the Emperor's birthday when the Palace gardens were open to the public. There were tens of thousands of people crowded in the enormous gardens which were extremely beautiful. At the end of the day, when it was time to leave, I saw in the distance the bridge, which I had to cross,packed solidly with people. To me it looked over-crowded so I decided to stay on a low hill overlooking that scene and take some pictures. Later I heard that people had been crushed to death on that bridge. So, as so many times before and after, I was lucky to have been saved from such a horrible experience.

About six months before my return to the States, I heard that the band librarian was going home. I did not wait a minute. I immediately went to the band commander and told him about all the "experience" I had with library work which by now, I suppose, was almost the truth. Anyway, he was duly impressed and the next thing I knew I became the new Band Librarian. This was not a minor improvement because the library was located in a large Quonset hut, which was much superior to the tents in which we had been living for more than a year. Inside the Quonset hut was the rehearsal room and a separate room for storage of instruments and music books. Also there was a room which was the office of the librarian and it was large enough to hold a bed and some cabinets and a desk. So, here I was, for the rest of my stay in Korea, in my private quarters. No more tent shared with other band members. I felt like a king. Before concerts I had to get the music ready but, except for rehearsals, I had a lot of free time which I used to practice the flute to get ready for my civilian life which was slowly approaching. I also had to copy music parts from the main score, one for each of the instruments. I enjoyed that very much.

During all this time Anita kept me posted on the progress which Mark was making. Needless to say, he was smarter and more handsome than any baby around. She sent me a

lot of photographs including copies of a photo of Anita holding him used in advertising some baby products. She also moved away from her parents' apartment where she had stayed after we got married. She now moved into a coop-apartment around the corner from where her parents were living in Jackson Heights, Queens, New York. We were very proud of that achievement because we owned this now. We had talked it over (in our letters), and had agreed that this was better than renting. This was one of the many highlights in our lives. With the money she received for the baby's pictures used for the advertisements she bought a washing machine and dryer and so we were already on our way to set up house!

The time for returning to the States was coming closer. I had to make plans for my future. After all, I was now responsible for a wife and a baby, a family. I was twenty-four years old and I had no idea what I would do. I wrote to Uncle Maurice asking him to take me back into his diamond factory but he was non-committal. Is it possible that he could feel from my letters that I was not all that enthusiastic about going back to that work? And yet, I had to make a living to support my family. So, I wrote a few more times without any better results. I was aware that I was eligible for the GI Bill of Rights benefits which included money for studies and subsidy for the family. To me that seemed quite a bit of money. Again, Anita and I discussed that in our correspondence and we agreed that, without a definite promise from my uncle, we would go it alone.

Next -> CHAPTER 10: RETURN TO CIVILIAN LIFE

Return to INDEX

CHAPTER 10: RETURN TO CIVILIAN LIFE

Finally the big day arrived, somewhere in the beginning of September 1954. I had to report, bag and baggage to the 25th Division Headquarters. I had no problem saying good-bye to my peers. I was glad to leave. There is no way to describe the feeling a soldier has when, after spending eighteen months in uniform in the backwoods of Korea, he finally leaves to join "normal" people in civilian clothes and without a commander or a sergeant directing his life. And so, for the last time I climbed into a jeep which took me quickly to Pusan, the same trip which I had taken, but in the opposite direction, in that endlessly long train ride eighteen months earlier going North into the combat zone. From there we were marched into a troop transport ship.

This ship was larger and less crowded than the one which had taken me eighteen months earlier to Japan on the way to Korea. And this time I knew just what to do: as soon as I was settled at my assigned bunkbed I immediately asked for the ship's chaplain and volunteered for the library job. I told him about all the experience I had had during the last ~~twenty~~ 18 months and he was duly impressed. I again opted to sleep in the library. This time the quarters were much larger and more luxurious and I was allowed to eat with the officers! So, you can see that I got a lot of mileage from my original adventure at Fort Lewis at the beginning of my army career when I sneaked away from our work duty.

After a long but uneventful crossing we landed in Seattle where we received a hero's welcome from a large crowd with a Marine band playing the National Hymn and some marches. The local papers showed a picture of our ship's arrival at the port. It was nice for a change to have a band play for me instead of me playing the flute. It was all very festive and overwhelming for me. As we marched off the ship many soldiers were greeted by their loved ones. I was sorry that I had not asked Anita to meet me at the boat but it would have been very difficult for her to fly all the way from New York. I immediately went to a phone to call her and tell her when I would be in Camp Kilmer, New Jersey, where I would get my discharge papers.

That very day I was taken to the airport where the Flying Tiger Airlines, which specialized in troop transport, took me to Midway Airport near Chicago and from there to Camp Kilmer. Was I ever surprised to see Anita waiting for me when the Army bus arrived in the camp. I could not control my emotions! I was still in my band dress uniform and I felt quite dirty after a long day of travel. But that was soon forgotten and we engaged in a long and exciting discussion about our immediate future, which was rather uncertain and about our baby who was being looked after by Anita's mother. After a while she suggested that I should buy some civilian clothes. That had not even occurred to me. I was so used to being in uniform. We went to the PX and we bought a pair of slacks and a white shirt. I had no idea whether I was allowed to wear "civvies" at the base. I found out that I could which was good, because we had to salute officers if we were in uniform and I was not used to that anymore. So, I quickly changed into my civvies. Did I ever feel strange. It was all so light and loose-fitting compared to the uniform. I decided right then and there that I would not

wear the uniform any more. We spent the evening together but I could not leave the base. It was very hard to say good-bye to Anita after such a long time of separation. And I was also very anxious to see my baby whom she had left in the care of her parents while visiting me.

The following days were endless in their routine of waiting for interviews and lectures about benefits and suggestions about adjusting to civilian life and living with a family again. All this ended up being of great help to me. I appreciated the information I received about my benefits under the GI. Bill of Rights. During one of the interviews the officer noticed in my records that I had been in the Hospital in Korea and he told me to apply for disability benefits. This I found remarkable. Not only were all these benefits available but the Government encouraged us to take full advantage of them and informed us of all that was available. It gave me a headstart which I will describe later. Also, I could get an aptitude test for free, which I took and which showed that I would be successful in anything I wanted as long as I did not have to stand on my feet. That did not help me much in finding out what career to choose. Well, I ended up in a career which required me to stand on my feet for eight to fourteen hours per day! Later more about that.

In the meantime the days seemed to drag on. First, I was told that I could not get out of the Army yet because I had one more month left (I entered the Army Oct. 21, 1952). This came as a shock to me. Then the good news came: I had one month vacation coming to me and so I was ready for discharge! All of a sudden things moved quickly. I had to go in for my last physical examination. Well, I was not worried about that. After all, I was in the best shape of my life, a trim 139 pounds and strong and healthy. Well, not so fast. The army has its surprises. I had to wait a long time for my examination and when they finally took my blood pressure it was too low to get discharged from the army! This is one of my chronic problems: I have low blood pressure and after sitting quietly for a long time or, worse yet, standing still for a long time, my blood pressure falls below normal. But this was to be my last day in the Army and nothing could keep me in one more day. The doctor was very nice and he suggested first to lie down with my feet raised. When it was still low he told me to run around the table a few times. Boy, did I ever run! Then it was high enough to be discharged from the Army. Thank G'd! After that I received my honorable discharge papers and a check with the discharge money.

This was it. I was a free man. I could just walk out of the gate and do what I wanted and go where I wished. But when I was out of the gate I did not know what to do! Fortunately there were other discharged soldiers standing around and we shared a taxi which took us to the Greyhound Station where we took a bus to New York. Here I was, now a civilian, still with my faithful little brown suitcase but now also with a duffelbag and a government backing me, starting another new life. In New York it took me a little while to find my way around but eventually I found my way to our coop apartment in Jackson Heights.

It was a very weird sensation. This was my apartment, my wife, my baby. And yet, I was a stranger to it all. It was a difficult adjustment. I wanted very much to take part in the decision making and yet, Anita had had to make most decisions on her own up to this time. I

had seen pictures of Mark, who now was more than nine months old, but I was a stranger to him. It took a while to get used to be around a baby and, I am sure, for Mark to have me around. I liked her parents from the beginning but they really did not know me very well. So, for a while I again felt ill at ease. Looking back now from so many years I do believe that I made a good and remarkably fast adjustment. Many GIs ended up having a lot of difficulties. I was lucky to have the support of a wonderful wife and in-laws who helped me greatly.

The first thing we had to decide was what I would do for a living. I had no idea. It never occurred to me that I could have become a librarian with all my "experience." Anyway, it was very important that some money would come into our household quickly. With my European upbringing I had insisted that Anita quit her job once she had the baby. Before that she had had an excellent job as a supervisor of nurses in the Ladies Garment Workers Union Hospital. It never even occurred to me that she could have returned to that job. I wanted her to be a hundred percent mother. So, we decided to talk to Uncle Maurice again. He said he would take me back but could not pay me more than a minimum salary which would not be enough to maintain our family. So, I thanked him, but no thanks. We parted and remained friends.

But now, what to do. I could not go back to college because, even with the G.I. Bill that would have been too much of a hardship for such a long time. We had no idea what to do. Now, here follows an event that would change my life for good. And it happened in a way as it happened so many times during my life: a combination of circumstances and a recognition of an opportunity which would make my life a happy and fulfilled one.

Anita used to have her hair done regularly by a hairdresser named Mario in Jackson Heights. While I was overseas they talked about me on and off. On one such occasion Mario asked what I planned to do after I left the Army. Anita said that we had no idea yet. He suggested that I should try hairdressing and she passed that on to me. I said: "No way. Why should I go into hairdressing? I don't know anything about that." (In those days it was unusual for a man to be a hairdresser.) She insisted that I should at least talk to him. And so I did. I went to see him on a quiet day so he would have time to talk to me. Well, he was pretty busy anyway and had to interrupt our conversation many times. But he was able to impress me. He explained to me how this kind of work gave one the freedom to live where one chose and to work almost like one's own boss; one could move to a different location and yet continue one's career. You almost can set your own hours and make a good living. He himself had a family with children whom he supported handsomely. Then he said something that convinced me. He pointed out how pleasant the work surroundings were and how much fun it was to talk to the clientele. I had noticed how everybody was talking and laughing. All this appealed to me especially since some of the ladies encouraged me and said that I would make a fine hairdresser. Mario explained to me that I could go to a Cosmetology school under the G.I. Bill and that I would know within one month if I would like it. If not, in those days I could be released from my contract with the school. I could graduate after six months and start making a living. He also said that I could call on him for advice any time I wanted.

It sounded very good to me and Anita was very encouraging.

The following day I went to the Bartell Academy of Cosmetology, which was recommended by Mario. As I stepped into the large room where students were practicing I heard a lot of laughter. Everybody seemed to have such a great time and the atmosphere was warm and inviting. The interview went well and the following week I started my schooling. I liked it immediately. Anita and I were so excited about my new career. Of course, not everything went so easily. The G.I. Bill did not pay enough to support a family of three, so I looked for a job to get some additional income. I found work at Segal's furniture store in Harlem, which meant that after a full day at the academy I had to take a subway to Harlem where I had a job as bookkeeper for four hours per day (from six pm until ten pm) at one dollar per hour. I felt so lucky! I was still used to the salary in Holland of one hundred and twenty-five gulden per month, then at my uncle's twenty-five dollars per week and then in the Army ninety-five dollars, and later one hundred and fifteen dollars per month. Now we received one hundred and sixty dollars from the G.I. Bill per month plus the cost of the academy plus eighty-four dollars per month from my job and seventeen dollars, the ten percent disability pay I received because of my hospitalization with my leg and back problem. Besides that, every year the amount of benefits I received under the G.I. Bill was deducted from our real estate taxes so that, the more benefit I received the less real estate tax we had to pay. And I had free medical care at the VA clinic. The payments on our one-bedroom Coop apartment was one hundred and five dollars per month. I thought I was in good financial shape but we had to make many sacrifices to make ends meet.

Anita was wonderful. She never complained about our simple life style and we always seemed to enjoy our lives and our little luxuries. Our entertainment consisted of walks to the small local parks where Mark played in a shallow pool and on the swings. Once in a while we took a bus to Kissena Park in Flushing, a half hour ride through Queens, and we would go for long walks through that lovely park. But that was a special treat which we could not afford too often. Occasionally Ettie and Pappa baby-sat and Anita and I walked to the neighborhood ice-cream parlor and had an ice-cream sundae. But that we could not effort very often either. A highlight for us was our frequent Sunday walk to La Guardia airport where Mark, from his baby carriage, enjoyed watching the airplanes leaving and arriving. On one of these walks we rested on a bench when the Good Humor ice-cream man passed and we shared one scoop of vanilla ice-cream in a cup. I noticed some black specks in the ice-cream and complained about it to the vender. He laughed and explained that it was from the vanilla bean, real vanilla. We got a big kick out of that and later we often reminded ourselves of this. We did not have much money but those were happy and carefree days.

I did very well in school and I enjoyed it immensely. Anita was my guinea-pig. I wanted to tint Anita's hair and asked one of the instructors for a good formula. I used the one she gave me with small variations for the rest of her life. It made her a beautiful redhead. Anita was a real sport; she was always willing to let me experiment on her hair. Believe me, she had some horrible haircuts that half year. But she had gorgeous thick and wavy hair, so it never looked too bad. She was always gracious about it and never made me feel bad. Once I took a

series of pictures of my "artwork." When we looked at them later we could not help but laugh. It was a horrible haircut but Anita posed like a movie star!

During the last couple of months we worked on customers and I felt like a great hairstylist. I wanted to show my talent to Mario so he invited me to do Anita's hair in his shop. I thought I made her gorgeous but when I was finished he said: "Look at her in the mirror. You made her head look like a pear!". When I looked I saw that he was right. From his criticism I learned to look at a customer's face from different angles before I would let her get out of the chair. All my life I learned from criticism and I was always shocked how people reacted as if I meant to hurt them when I criticized them. I could never understand that.

Often I volunteered to go to a department store salon where they looked for future hairstylists. But for now we were only allowed to shampoo their customers' hair. Here again I learned a lot while still in school. The first time I washed a lady's hair I got her all wet and she was sent back because her hair was still full of shampoo. I was afraid to rinse her any more but the hairdresser showed me how to cup my hand under her neck so I could rinse it well without getting the customer all wet. This, too, gave me a headstart when I finally started my first job.

In order to graduate from the academy we had to do a difficult written test and make a perfect finger wave on a customer, which was in high fashion in those days. I never was good at doing finger waves but I was lucky: Ettie had a perfect natural wave in her hair. All I had to do was to wet her hair, push it forward and, voila, there was a perfect finger wave! It was the best in the graduating class and it was shown as an example to the failing students!

Next -> CHAPTER 11: THE START OF A NEW CAREER

Return to INDEX

CHAPTER 11: THE START OF A NEW CAREER

Now I was a licenced hairstylist and I needed a job. Some of my co-students started working immediately at the downtown shops where they gave cheap permanent waves without any styling, just kinky curls. I did not want to do that. I wanted to work in a fine styling salon like Mario's. I did not want to ask him for a job because I felt that this would put him on the spot. I had trouble finding work because, wherever I applied, they wanted experienced stylists. I told them that I had six months experience (I did not tell them that it was at the Academy) but even that did not help. Mario told me about free schools for tinting and permanent waving. I looked into it and found out that these were clinics of beauty product manufacturers. Every day people with problems with their hair color or permanent wave came into these clinics and experts in their field showed us how to resolve the customers' problems. This was done at no cost to the patron or to the hairdresser learning how to solve these problem cases. And so I started a new routine: in the mornings I walked for miles up and down the major streets of Manhattan, from one beauty salon to the other, applying for work and in the afternoon I spent three to four hours, five days every week at the various clinics. My favorite ones were the L'Oreal and Wella clinics for coloring and the Helene Curtis clinic for permanent waving.

Occasionally some shop would hire me, with disastrous results. My first "job" was in a high fashion salon where they did not use clips yet for setting hair. Clippies were just a new invention in 1965 and the old-fashioned salons did not want to use them yet. It was below their dignity. In the Academy we had learned to set hair with hairpins but I was not very good at it. But I thought I could bluff my way through it. However, the salon decided to test me with a most difficult customer, an old lady with fine and thin hair. As a matter of fact, she had hardly any hair! I put on my bravest face and got to work. As I put the pins in her hair they kept falling out. I put more and more pins in and finally enough stayed in so that I could put her under the hair drier. My hands were sweating by then. I thought that at least for the next twenty minutes I could relax and calm my nerves but when I glanced in the direction of my customer I saw more and more hairpins falling out from under the drier. I kept on replacing them. Needless to say, that was my first and last customer in that shop. In another shop I was hired as an assistant to be worked in as a hairstylists. It was a large and extremely busy shop. Early in the day I was told to get some shampoo ready. They gave me a gallon of concentrated shampoo and showed me how much to use to dilute it. After I finished diluting one bottle of shampoo I dropped the whole gallon of shampoo concentrate on the floor. In those days these were glass gallon bottles! There was glass and thick oozing shampoo all over the place. I spent the rest of the day cleaning up the floor. And that was the end of that job. The third shop which gave me a chance was an extremely high-fashioned salon where a famous hair stylist had just died. He had left his enormously wealthy clientele stranded and the owners were very anxious to replace him as soon as possible. I was his replacement. I even had an assistant who did the shampooing and even put the cape on the lady and just about everything else. After I did three or four customers the word must have gotten out because nobody showed up anymore. That took care of that job.

I went to the academy and asked if they knew of a shop which needed help and they sent me to the Gertz Department store beauty salon. That place was extremely busy. They paid the minimum wage of forty dollars per week. That plus the tips I received and my part time job in Harlem was enough to make ends meet if we were very frugal. On my day off I still went to the tint and permanent wave clinics. Already then I discussed with Anita the possibility of starting a savings routine! I thought that I was doing pretty well. With my background, this was quite good. So, before we spent any money we put five dollars aside in a bank every month which paid two percent interest accumulated daily. I thought I was rich! Within a year we had more than sixty dollars in our savings account! Wow! After a while I realized that this was not to be my career job, especially because we were expecting our second child within half a year. So, I started looking for a better opportunity.

For one whole year after graduating from the Academy of Cosmetology, I looked for a permanent job. In the meanwhile I accumulated a large amount of practical knowledge in tinting and permanent waving, especially in solving problems in those fields. But my hair styling and cutting left a lot to be desired. Finally, sometime in the spring of 1956 I found a job right in our own neighborhood. It was in a shop with the best reputation in our area by the name of "Thomas and Victor." It was just the kind of beauty salon I was looking for: a clean, modern, busy styling salon with high prices. Thomas and Victor were partners, both young and ambitious, and I was the third hairstylist. The girls were assistants and manicurists. I was so excited. This was a great opportunity with unlimited potential. Of course, things did not go without some problems. After my first haircut, Thomas, who was the better and busier of the two partners, called me to the back and told me that he would not let me work on customers until I learned the latest haircut. It was a masculine looking, short haircut called the "shingle." It was the then current fad. So, he sat me down on a straight chair in the back workroom, put a bottle upside-down between my knees and told me to practice going up and down the neck of the bottle simultaneously with a comb and scissors, as done by a barber. After several hours I managed to do that smoothly. The next day he trusted me with a young lady who wanted the latest hairstyle. I did a pretty good job but he cleaned it up for me and showed me what it was supposed to look like. I really appreciated his patience and the fact that he gave me a chance. I became so proficient in that haircut that he soon gave me all the ladies who requested that style . When he learned that I was good at problem solving, he gave me all customers who had problems with their hair color or permanent waves. I soon started to build up a following and became very busy within a short time. Victor, who was not as good a hairstylist as Thomas, often had complaints about his permanent waves. Thomas gave these customers to me to straighten their hair out. I finally started to make some real money.

One day an airline hostess came into the shop and luckily Victor sent her to me. I started to set her hair in Clippies(they did not use hairpins in our shop, I had made sure of that right away!) when she stopped me. She had just come in from Germany where they styled her hair completely with rollers. I had heard about this newest idea but I had never seen it done. I talked this over with my bosses and they agreed to get one set of rollers, just to try it out. The next time that same young lady came into the shop I surprised her with the rollers. I was

the first one to use them in the area and it became an instant success. The hostess' supervisor called for a meeting of the stewardesses and told them that this was the look she wanted them to have. Before I knew what was going on I had many stewardesses asking to have me do their hair. I became a successful hairdresser with a steady following.

This came just in time because on September 15, 1955 our second child, Rochelle Lynn, was born. In the middle of the night Anita felt that it was the time to go to the hospital. But first she wanted a little party. She called her parents who lived around the corner. They were knocking on our door within minutes. Anita was calm and cool but I was a nervous wreck! After all, this was my first experience with the birth of a baby. Anita wanted some coffee and cake we had in the freezer. I kept pushing her to hurry up but she was just laughing and having a good time visiting. Finally we called a taxi and went to the hospital. Rochelle was born very soon after Anita was prepared in the delivery room. Rochelle came out smiling (maybe because of our midnight snack?) and never stopped doing that. I felt like a real big shot: a family with two children and I had a good job and we had a growing, albeit slowly growing, saving account.

I was now twenty-five years old. Rochelle was a really great addition to our family. She was such a happy and upbeat baby. Everyone said that she was as cute as a cookie and so she got her nickname "Cookie" which stuck with her for the rest of her early life. Because of our growing family, and also because now we could afford it better, we decided that it was time to move into a larger coop apartment. This worked out really well. Because we already were owners in the coop, we had preference on the waiting list and we were lucky that a two bedroom apartment became available soon. Looking back now I still get excited tracing the gradual growth and success of our family. We still could not afford any entertainment beyond a bus ride to Kissena Park and an occasional trip into Manhattan and The Central park zoo but it was a beginning and a continually improving situation. Anita was an angel throughout all of it. She worked so hard and her rewards were not great but she was always cheerful and never complained.

In 1956 I had a run-in with the IRS. Looking back at it now, it really was funny but at the time it happened we went through an anxious few weeks. In 1954 I did not make enough money for the long form of our tax return but in 1955 I was doing a little better. I made out my own tax form. It seemed simple enough except that I always have a little quirk in my Dutch brain which sometimes makes me interpret things incorrectly. So, when it asked on the form an amount for child care, which was tax deductible, I figured out how much it costs to take care of my two babies! Well, some time in 1956 I was called into the IRS where they questioned me how I could afford to pay for child care with the little money I was making. They said that I must be making more than I had declared. I already saw myself sitting in a jail cell. I told them I did not make more money than I had declared on our tax return but they said that everybody spends so an so much on entertainment and travel plus the child care costs plus money for food and that would total to more than I had declared. I told the inspector about our "travel and entertainment" but he did not believe me. Not until he asked to whom I paid for the child care did I realize my mistake. We all had a good laugh but I still

had to pay an extra seventy-five dollars in taxes, I guess to pay for his time. I did not feel like fighting the IRS and I dutifully paid it. I have been more careful from that time.

Life was getting better. As I became more successful at work our financial situation improved somewhat. We bought new clothing and we started to expand our outings. Mark and Rochelle progressed nicely. They got along fine. Rochelle was born with a big grin on her face and she continued that way. She had lovely dimples. With a little touch to her lip she would smile broadly and show off her dimples. Anita often wanted to show this to friends and relatives. Sometimes Rochelle was asleep. Then Anita would gently touch her lips or cheeks and Rochelle would break out in a smile while still half asleep. We continued our favorite walk to the airport, now with one of us pushing the baby carriage and the other pushing a stroller. Mark was extremely bright. He recognized numbers at a very young age. He would point to an address and read the numbers aloud. Also he soon talked very well. He loved big words; he would point to a motor cycle and gleefully say "motokikle," one of his favorite words. He loved to go to the small neighborhood parks where he splashed around in the shallow wading pools while Rochelle was watching him from the carriage. She looked very intensely probably to remember how to do it all later. And they both loved to swing for hours.

Things were going our way. In the summer of 1957 Anita and I had our first real vacation. Ettie and Pappa baby- sat for us and we took off for a long weekend to the White Mountains. It felt as if the world opened up for us. Since we had met some five years earlier we had only been in New York, mostly in Queens, and I had spent time in the Army. Now we were breaking out of our boundary and we had some time all by ourselves. It felt great and I still appreciate our in-laws doing that for us.

We took a bus and stayed in a nice hotel in the Bear Mountains in upstate New York. We went for long nature walks. I, of course took lots of pictures. One day they let us test-drive a Chrysler car with the latest inventions: push button automatic shift and power steering. We were so impressed. We decided to check into the possibility of buying our first car! After we returned we went to a car showroom In our neighborhood and looked at the Plymouth cars on display. Almost every day we walked by there and looked longingly at the shining cars. In the fall of 1957 the new models came out and they advertised a car with the new power steering and push button shift. We had to go in and inquire. Of course, the salesman "got" us. Right then and there we ordered a 1957 Plymouth sedan and we ordered five seat belts, two in the front and three in the back. That was unusual in those days when people were not as safety conscious as they are today. I must have had a premonition because we soon would need all five seat belts. The car cost $1750.--. Of course, we did not have the money. No problem; the salesman instantly arranged a car loan for us to be paid off in three years. We did not know for sure that we could afford the payments but we went for it. That was one of the best decisions we had made. It changed our whole outlook on life. There was a little problem: I did not know how to drive! Fortunately, Anita did and she took the car home. I immediately made arrangement for driving lessons.

The next night I sat behind a steering wheel for the first time although in a driving school's car. It was my luck that it was pouring cats and dogs that night. Anita thought that I should cancel the lesson but I could not wait for my chance to drive a car. The instructor was excellent. First he made me sit in the car in the driver's seat. "How does that feel?" he asked. I was too excited to answer. He calmed me down and showed me all the knobs and buttons and then he told me to start the car and put it into gear. I was driving slowly. Wow! I was shaking! I was so proud as I inched a few yards along. It was so easy. Then he told me to stop and he said: "See all these cars on the road? In every car there is a potential killer and that is how I want you to drive!" The rest of my life I took his advice to heart. So, he told me to drive into a quiet side street and when I felt a little more confident he told me to turn into Queens Boulevard, the busiest street in Queens, with three lanes on each side plus two side lanes on each side. There was plenty of traffic and the streets were glistening and full of puddles and it was still raining. I hesitated but he encouraged me and before I knew it I was on the boulevard surrounded on all sides by cars. It took me just a few minutes to get the feeling of driving under these most difficult circumstances and then I felt very comfortable. That was the only lesson I had. After that I practiced parking and making U-turns in our own car. I immediately felt comfortable in the car. I loved driving and I still do. I give this instructor all the credit for my safe driving record. He taught me the right way to drive: defensively. After a short time I took my driving test which I passed with flying colors. This really changed my life. All of a sudden we were free like birds; we could go somewhere at a moment's notice, which we often did. We took day trips to upstate New York and to Connecticut. During the summer months we frequently went to Sunken Meadows, a beach and park on the Northshore of Long Island. It was safe for the children and it was a lovely ride to the beach.

One of our favorite trips, and it became a yearly custom, was a week in the Pocono Mountains of Pennsylvania. The first time we went we had no idea what to expect. We had no reservations and here we came with two little children and my wife pregnant with our third. The ride to the Poconos is very scenic, especially as one approaches the Delaware river. We took our time and we arrived late in the afternoon at Mount Pocono, a little town where we hoped to stay. We stopped off at a few places on the way but we did not like what we saw. We definitely did not want to spend a week with the children in a hotel. Just as we became desperate we saw an information booth of the local Chamber of Commerce. Were we ever lucky! They directed us to the Brown family. We had to get off the main highway, follow a narrow country road through a gorgeous forest for a few miles and there we saw the place. The main house was a large old wooden house. Mrs. Brown pointed to an idyllic cabin sat back in the forest which was to be our home every year for a week for many years. It had been a barn but they had rebuilt it and now it was a well equipped modern cabin with a large living room, kitchen and two bedrooms. It was ideal for us. It was spacious, light and comfortable and reasonable. That was important because I had just started to have a steady income and still could not afford anything luxurious.

The first night we could hardly sleep: it was so quiet and dark. All you heard was the sound of the wind in the trees. Once in a while we heard animals rummaging around the cabin and

once, looking quietly from our bedroom window, we saw a large deer walking by. This was all new and exciting for us. We were "city folks" and this was a different world. It was excellent for the children. During the day they could run around as much as they wanted. We went on lovely trips to gorgeous waterfalls and forests. Many times we went to a lake to let the children swim and we had a picnic on the beach. One of the highlights was our trip to Bushkill falls. After entering the park gate we had to hike a long way over narrow trails and boardwalks following a wild creek through the most beautiful forest I had ever seen. It was a long and arduous hike, especially for Anita who was now late in her pregnancy. She did not complain and enjoyed the outing thoroughly. Our reward came when we arrived at the waterfall, a steep roaring waterfall. We rested there for a while after which we returned slowly but surely to our car and our cabin. Needless to say, I have a lot of slides and movies of these excursions.

This was also the time when I became serious about painting. I had taken some classes in a highschool and even at a school of art. In the Poconos I did my first painting from nature when I painted a picture of our cabin with the forest as the background. Since then I did some twenty paintings, many of these ocean and other water scenes. To my great surprise, I actually sold one. Others I gave away and we have several of these hanging in our house. I was inspired to do this by uncle Maurice who was an excellent painter. My last work I did just after we moved to Phoenix, in 1966. It was a painting of Anita lighting the Hanukka candles on the last night of that festival. It was quite good but I lost interest in it and I have never painted since. Some day I hope to get back to that again.

We were very proud to own such a nice car but we were brought up in the old-fashioned way and so we were very unhappy to make our monthly payments. As I told you before, we started saving a little from the very first time I made a little money. During those few years we had accumulated a few thousand dollars and we decided to dip into that fund and to pay off our car. The bank was quite surprised but we were very happy to get this behind us. We decided from then on not ever to have a debt again and we stuck to that decision the rest of our lives, except for a mortgage on a house.

When things go that well something has to go wrong and it did. I became very busy and successful at Thomas and Victor's. That became a problem for Victor. He never was as popular as Thomas and now I was catching up with him. Some of his customers asked me to do the permanent waves and hair coloring. This became embarrassing. At one point, after Victor was out of the shop for a few weeks due to an illness, many of his customers changed their appointments permanently to me. Victor, who was not very strong , slowed down a lot. He showed signs of irritation with some of his customers and certainly with me. I talked it over with Thomas and he agreed that Victor had become unhappy with the situation. I decided to look for another place to work. Here follows another episode in my life where seemingly difficult times turned out for the better and ended up preparing me for my next step-up into the future.

It was now the summer of 1958. I was twenty eight years old. It did not take me long to find

a job this time; I now had a following of a very fine clientele. I wanted to stay in the neighborhood so I would not lose this following and I did not want to commute. I do not remember how I found "Pierre Hairstylists" but somehow I got into contact with Mr. Pierre and he hired me on the spot. He was thrilled to find a hairdresser with knowledge of permanent waving and hair coloring and who could do the latest hairstyles. With the following I would bring into his salon I demanded and got a high commission rate which enhanced my financial situation instantly.

This job was absolutely perfect for me and a preparation for my future success. Mr. Pierre, whose real name was Gustaf Drakoudis, was a middle-aged man from Greece, who was tired of working and, because of that, impatient with his customers. He often poked fun at them and he was not always polite to them. He was an incorrigible gambler; he liked nothing better than to take off to the races where he lost a lot of money and seldom won anything. He thought nothing of leaving the shop, even if he had appointments, to go to the race track or to his friends for a long poker game where, according to him, he made the money for his horse betting. This of course gave me the opportunity to build up an additional clientele. He had two girls working for him and a manucurist who doubled as a receptionist. Together they had stolen plenty from him while he was out of the shop. He was aware of it but he called that part of his entertainment expense. He made me the unofficial manager. The first thing I did was getting the girls to enter all the money they charged the customers on a sales slip and I told them to stop taking supplies from the shop. That did not go over too well but after some months they got used to it and we got along fabulously. They were also rather lazy and moved like molasses. This also was to my advantage because I was able to get extra customers in my chair while they were busy gossiping.

The shop started to flourish. Pierre was so pleased with me that he took more and more time off to go to the races. He also put me in charge of ordering supplies. In the beginning this was difficult but I soon learned the ropes and the supply men were very helpful. Within six months I was completely in charge of the shop. Both Pierre and I were thrilled and the girls were also happy to earn some more income than they had previously. Soon the shop had a reputation of a first class salon with the latest hairstyles. We even did hairstyles with rollers, a novelty! Then a new hair styling technique became popular: teasing or "ratting" the hair, to make it look like a rat's nest or a balloon. I never got the hang of it, so I decided to take a stand: I was busy enough with my customers without teasing their hair, so I turned down anybody who wanted their hair teased and gave them to the girls. I continued that throughout the rest of my career. I might add that I did very well without teasing the hair. There were plenty of ladies who liked the soft, casual look I gave them. Besides that, it took the girls so long to do all that fussing, that I could do three clients during that time or even wrap a permanent wave. So, I did not mind giving up the "tease" clientele.

In the meantime, Mr. Pierre gradually spent less time in the shop. He gave me the keys and full responsibility of the business. One day he came back from the race track all excited. He kept repeating: " I almost won $2000.-- on a long shot! Missed it by the tip of the nose!" I asked him what good "almost" was but he ignored that and kept telling everybody in the

shop about his exciting afternoon when he "almost" won $2000.--. On another day he tried to encourage me to place a bet on a horse. It was the Kentucky Derby race (at that time I did not even know what that was) and he explained everything about the odds and told me that for a two-dollar bet I could win a lot of money. After a while he somewhat convinced me and I reluctantly placed my bet. I figured that I might as well win big so I bet on a long shot, something like thirty two to one. He put the radio on very loudly, something that the customers certainly did not appreciate. I was very busy that afternoon so I did not pay much attention to all these goings on. Every once in a while I asked how the race was getting along. Well, it had not started yet. A while later I asked again because there was a lot of music and applause and announcements and it all sounded very exciting. No, it had not started yet. More screaming and hollering. Still nothing. I told him to tell me when it would start. Well, he forgot because minutes later he told me I had lost my bet. I had not even noticed that the race had started and it was already over and I was out of my hard earned two dollars. That was my first and last bet on the races. Another time he came in between two stern looking policemen. He was booked for off-track betting which was then illegal. The next morning he came back to work. I asked him how things were going because I had not expected him so soon. I thought that he would spend at least some time in jail. Well, he explained the facts of life to me: he had given a lawyer a few thousand dollars and the lawyer knew whom to pay off so he did not even have to go before a judge. That was something new to me. I had never learned that in the Lorenz Lyceum in Holland, in the Army or even at the Beauty Academy!

Life was bright and sunny. Our finances became more secure and, thank G'd, we had a healthy family so we could enjoy life to the fullest with our limited finances. We went on rides regularly, sometimes to Sunken Meadow Beach (our favorite), occasionally to Jones Beach or the Bear Mountains in upstate New York. We also went regularly to Central park for a nice walk and a visit to the zoo and to the Bronx Park where the flower display in the spring was exquisite. On many of these excursions Ettie and Pappa joined us. I believe that they really appreciated these outings because they had no other way of getting around.

I have no horror stories to tell about my in-laws. Ettie and Pappa were angels. We always enjoyed their company and they loved us and the children. I loved them dearly and I believe that they liked me also quite a bit. They always showed appreciation for what little we did for them. We spent all our holidays with them and we especially looked forward to the yearly Passover Seders (traditional meals and readings) in their house. Ettie was a good cook and Pappa helped her very much. And he was so proud to lead us in the traditional prayers. He always had some jokes to tell us many of which he regularly repeated on later occasions. He was a thoroughly good person. He always worked hard but never made much money. He gave his boss more than his wages worth. With all that he worked till well in his seventies before he finally retired. Ettie was the educated person in the family. She had gone to college (unusual in those days for a girl) and she financially helped their son Milton and daughter Anita through college. Anita had a masters degree in nursing and she worked in a supervisory job until I insisted (because of my European background and culture) that a married woman should not work. ~~It was up to the man of the house to provide for the~~

family!

So, the whole family was very close except for Milton. He lived in New Jersey and, except for the few times we took Ettie and Pappa there for a visit, we hardly ever saw them. However, there was another member of the family who was my favorite. That was Tante Peppi. She was a soft and rolly-polly person who had endured many hardships in her life but she maintained an utterly positive outlook on life. Even though she could hardly walk and only in shoes which were custom made for her, she never complained and one never heard a single bad word about anybody from her. She loved everybody and everybody was wonderful and talented and beautiful and well-behaved in her eyes. When she came for a visit she brought a box full of little nothings for everybody: a little key, an old little purse, some buttons or trinkets she got from who-knows-where. The story went around that Milton, Anita's older brother, visited her one day when she had just acquired a new piano. Milton, a little kid then, managed to scratch some words with a nail into the piano. Everybody was so upset but Tanta Peppi said:" At least he spelled the words correctly!" I do not know whether this really happened but I tend to believe it because that is the kind of person she was. She was the sister of Ettie and she, too, was highly intelligent. They were Einsteins and supposedly related to Albert Einstein. Tante Peppi had a great influence on my way of thinking. I tried all my life to follow her philosophy. It is not easy always to think positively about all persons one knows or to see hope when things look to be hopeless. But I tried and it has helped me through some difficult times.

In the meantime life was good to us. Our family was growing and we had more money for entertainment. It was around this time that we invited my mother to spend some time with us. I had kept up a steady correspondence with her but I had not seen her since 1952. She had no money to pay for such a journey so we decided to treat her. The first time, in November 1958, was very special because this was at the birth of our third child, Robert Scott. It was a double treat: the birth of our child and the first visit of my mother. There was such excitement in the air. It was hard for Anita to have a strange mother-in-law in the house while she was in the last stages of her pregnancy but things worked out. For me it was one of the highlights in my life and the children loved "Grandma Julie" instantly.

Day of Brith (circumcision) of Robert, Nov. 1958. From left to right: Ettie, Anita, Robert and I.

On Nov. 16 1958 our youngest child, Robert Scott Greenwood was born. It completed a well rounded family. Robert was handsome from the minute he was born and he had a devilish gleam in his eyes which we adored. He constantly looked around and focused intently on something he wanted to learn or remember. My mother liked to feed Robert. During one of these feedings she called us over and said: "This boy (Robert) has such a strong will. He is only a few weeks old and, look, he takes the bottle with great force and pushes it away when he wants to take a break. When he is good and ready he grabs the bottle again and puts it to his mouth to drink some more. You are going to have your hands full with this boy when he grows older." This proved to be prophetic but we could not see that at that moment.

It was quite a sight to see Anita, with Mark walking along her side, and pushing Robert in the baby carriage with Rochelle sitting on a seat on top of the carriage. Often, when she went shopping, she even dragged a shopping cart behind her in addition to her entourage of children. It was quite a sight! Sometimes she would meet me that way as I was walking home from work.

Grandma Julie only stayed for a few weeks. Then we saw her off from the quay of New York Harbor. It was a very emotional farewell especially as the "Rotterdam" slowly left the pier and then gradually turned around to face the ocean and little by little my mother disappeared in the distance. I still can feel this sad emotion after all these years. At subsequent trips I did not feel it so strongly. I suppose I got used to saying farewell but during the first parting it was very difficult. We immediately decided to have her come over every other year and that is what happened until she became too ill to travel.

Next -> CHAPTER 12: STARTING OUR OWN BUSINESS

Return to INDEX

CHAPTER 12: STARTING OUR OWN BUSINESS

And so our family grew and reached its final size, the perfect American family, husband, wife and three children. We had a little nest egg and I had by now a lot of confidence in my abilities as a hair stylist. I had gathered a very substantial following and a lot of experience in both the practical side of the business and the managing of a shop. One day I found out that one of Pierre's friends would have lost his beauty salon if Pierre had not bailed him out with $7000.--, in those days quite a considerable amount of money. I began to get an uncomfortable feeling that some day Pierre could lose his salon also. I decided to ask him to sell ~~me~~ his salon. However, he absolutely did not want to give up his shop. I did not even get a chance to make him an offer. No way.

Anita and I talked it over and we decided to look for a location, not too far from Mr. Pierre's shop, to open our own beauty shop. As always, Anita encouraged me very much. She had a lot to do with my success. I would not have done some of the daring things I did without her encouragement and approval.

Now follows one of the most exciting periods of my life. I started to look for a location to open my own salon. Not much was available. I talked to the salesmen and they were all very encouraging. They told me that I would have nothing to worry about and that I would be very successful with the experience I had. It gave me much confidence to proceed. After all, I had now five years of solid experience behind me and I knew all the aspects of the business and I had accumulated some money to pay for a business. I surely did not want to go into great debt and, as always, I did not want to have to make payments.

Finally I saw an advertising for a shop for rent in Elmhurst, which was close to where we lived. The telephone number connected me with the landlord in Brooklyn. At the first opportunity we went to see him. He was a charming person. He said that it was well located on Broadway, the main street in Elmhurst, with a bus stop on both sides of the street in front of the store and a subway entrance just half a block from the store. It was located in a strip of stores which included an A. & P., a large supermarket. It all sounded great to me. His first mention of the rent was very high but I felt I could get that lowered during a subsequent meeting. Then came the bad news: it was presently occupied by gypsies who were not paying their rent. If I liked the store and signed a lease he could have them evicted in a short time. That did not sound very good to me. I certainly did not like the idea of throwing a family of gypsies into the streets of New York. But he encouraged me to have a look.

That same afternoon I went to the store. I liked the location very much. It was walking distance both from our apartment and also from Mr. Pierre's salon, so I would not loose my following. It was a busy shopping street surrounded by lovely small private homes. I found out that this was a mixed Irish and German neighborhood. A little farther were several six story apartment buildings each with eighty-four apartments. It all sounded too good to be true. I checked the competition. There were two beauty salons very near but they were both old-fashioned and dark. These did not worry me at all. All this, and more, I found out before

I entered the shop. I was very hesitant to face the gypsy occupants.

I did not know what to expect but what I saw was something from a grade B movie. The front of the store was empty with some wooden boards nailed to the walls. In the back of the store was a space separated by Persian carpets hung from the ceiling. A middle-aged lady motioned me in. She was dressed like a gypsy out of a movie with a red kerchief covering most of her shiny black hair. She invited me to sit at a small table covered with a dark cloth and she asked what she could do for me. I hastened to tell her that I did not want my future told but that the landlord had sent me to see if I wanted to rent his shop. She asked me what business I was in and when I told her that I wanted to open a beauty salon she smiled and told me that this was an excellent location and that I would do very well here. She also gave a little history of the shop; that it used to be a butcher shop; therefore there were boards on the wall where there had been freezers and hooks for the meat and sausages. She and her family had been there six months. I was rather embarrassed. I did not expect her to be so gracious to the person who was going to be the cause of her eviction. I told her that I was sorry but that, if I decided to go through with it, she would have to move out soon, maybe within a few days. She told me not to worry and repeated her assurances of my good future at this location. When I asked if I could come back to take some measurements she told me that I would be welcome anytime. There was no sign of resentment in her tone of voice or in her words. When I left she followed me to the door, held my hand and said: "You know, gypsies bring good luck." It almost made me cry. I immediately called the landlord and told him that I wanted to rent the store.

A hurricane hit New York City on the day we were to sign the lease. Rain is supposed to bring good luck but a hurricane? Anita, who was always ready for an adventure, encouraged me to go anyway. We were so excited about the whole event that we did not even notice the torrential rain and enormous winds until we were on the Brooklyn Bridge. We could barely see more than a few feet ahead of us. The bridge was noticeably swaying and the roadway was dancing up and down under our car. We decided to proceed very slowly and, of course, we were the only idiots on the bridge. Coming off the bridge we had to make a left turn. A little into the street was a small triangle where we had to make another turn. We could barely see the road ahead. As we eased to the left of the triangle a police car appeared out of nowhere with his lights flashing and the cop motioned to me to open the window. I just opened it an inch and the rain came pouring in. He also opened his window a bit and yelled over the noise of the hurricane that I was in a one way street going the wrong way! I was just wondering if he would be crazy enough to get out of his car to give me a ticket when he signaled to me to follow him. I sighed a sigh of relief when he led us out of our predicament and let us go. The gypsy lady had been right: she brought me good luck.

After some negotiating (I wanted a ten year lease plus a five year option to renew, which we got with increases of the rent built in) we left with the lease in our hands. We did not waste any time and the same day we went to one of the supply houses to talk about setting up the shop. We had negotiated three months(!) free of rent to clean out the mess in the store and to prepare it for the opening. We did not waste any time. The supplyman was very helpful and

recommended a contractor, to rebuild the whole shop. This was wonderful because I was still working and I knew that, if Mr. Pierre would hear about my opening a shop so close to him, he would fire me immediately and I would lose my following.

Now I became like a slave driver. I constantly visited the shop and made sure the contractor stayed on schedule and did what he had promised. I was lucky that Mr. Pierre spent so much time at the horse races which gave me the opportunity to run out once in a while to check on the progress of the shop. Within six weeks the shop was ready except for the painting of the walls and the installation of air-conditioning (I was the first air-conditioned beauty shop in that neighborhood). I really was so lucky! The painter was an older, experienced man and he suggested that the walls should have a design with gold paint on top of the white background. He did not even charge us much more for it and it ended up with a wonderful effect. After the walls were painted a soft white color he went with a rag dipped in gold paint over all the walls and dappled gold paint on top of the white paint. It looked absolutely beautiful. I was also lucky with the refrigeration people. I needed five tons to cool the whole area adequately. They suggested two two-and-a-half ton units, one at each side of the store. This was excellent advice for several reasons: if it was not very warm or not so busy I could turn off one unit; if one unit broke I still had some cooling from the other and with cooling coming from both sides instead from one central place, I had even cooling without cold air blasting from one area. It proved to be a real money saver and the store was comfortable all the time. In the meantime, while all this construction was going on, we had a steady stream of people walking in and asking what was coming and when we would be open for business. Without exception, they showed genuine interest in a modern beauty salon. One day, on my day off and with the shop nearly finished, I felt like a master of ceremony: I had to greet people all the time, explain everything to them. It felt very good. I decided that the window area would be open so passers- by could always look in. That was a novelty in those days. Salon windows were always covered for the privacy of the customers with high wooden dividers between the different stations. I am sure that I was one of the first to have designed a salon which was visible from one end to the other, brightly lit and decorated in bright, lively colors. After much deliberation we decided to call the salon "Elmhurst Coiffeurs." The name had a nice sound to it.

One week before the grand opening, I gave notice to my boss. Again, I was treated so nicely and graciously and with great respect by my boss. He showed no sign of anger, just disappointment and he genuinely wished me the best of luck. This was such a relief to me because I did not want to part on bad terms and yet I could not give him much notice. I also promised him that I would not compete with him with my prices. I already had decided to be the highest priced salon in Elmhurst and not to offer any specials. That took courage but at that time I already had a lot of confidence and the salesmen, who knew me very well, convinced me that I would be very successful with that policy.

I set the opening date for Thursday, September 1, 1960. Anita and I spent hours and hours spreading five thousand leaflets advertising the grand opening with refreshments. To my great consternation I realized just a few days before the opening date that it fell on Rosh

Hashanah, the Jewish New Year. In all the excitement I had forgotten completely about looking at the Jewish calendar for holidays! We talked it over and Anita and I agreed not to open on that day! It is not easy to be Jewish but I wanted to make that sacrifice. So, I quickly made a sign which said: "Closed due to the holiday." What a way to start a new business! On that day, after the morning synagogue service, we walked past the store with the whole family. We were a little sad for this turn of events but when we saw the hundreds of people looking into the store which was completely lit, our spirits were soon lifted.

The first working day after the holiday was a Monday, not especially a busy day for a beauty salon. The store was advertised to be open from nine to six. Anita and I came in at eight in the morning to set things up for the first day of work. I really did not expect much business. I had a few appointments of my old clientele but not until the afternoon. I had just opened the door when a lady walked in and asked if someone could do her hair. I went to work immediately. To make a long story short, I and my two girls did not stop from early that morning until ten o'clock in the evening when we still had to turn back more people. The next day it continued and we never stopped being busy until I sold the store six years later. I asked Ettie, my mother-in-law to act as our receptionist. She accepted and she was wonderful and charming and a perfect hostess.

I need to talk a little about my help. About one month before the scheduled opening I put an advertisement in the paper for hairstylists. I had many responses but only one seemed to me to be qualified for the kind of hairstylist I was looking for. Her name was Connie. She was an excellent stylist but she was not very ambitious. However she was neat and clean and looked professional behind the chair. I was satisfied with her. I wanted at least one more stylist. One day, before the opening date, a young lady called me on the phone. She sounded so pleasant and so polite that I hired her on the spot even though she told me that she had just finished school. I felt that if she was even half as pleasant as she sounded on the telephone she would do very well with the clientele I hoped to get into the shop. I had judged her correctly. When she showed up she was extremely anxious to get busy. She was good looking, clean, sweet and polite. Her name was Diane (I forgot what her last name was) and the customers liked her instantly. She loved to work and she was a very good hairdresser. The hours never were too long for her and she never was too busy to take another customer. "Diane, can you work in another customer?" Without hesitation she would say: "Oh sure, just make yourself comfortable and I will be with you soon." That is the attitude I needed in this shop which had a steady stream of people walking in. The success of our shop had a lot to do with her cheerful disposition. She was also a good sales person.

For the next three months we all worked from eight in the morning until nine or ten in the evening with little time for rest. It was almost too much so I decided first to get more help. I hired a gentleman, also a good hairdresser who quickly built up a nice clientele. Then I decided to cut back the hours so we would not overwork ourselves and we stayed open until nine o'clock only on Thursday and Friday. Within a very short time the girls were too busy to do manicures, so I hired a manicurist and later one more operator to take the overflow and

help with the manicures. The shop was almost always full of people and we all had a good time and we all made a lot of money which made the operators happy, too. The gypsy had been right: she had brought me good luck. My lovely mother-in-law helped as a receptionist until she needed an operation. Then Connie's sister helped out. But she could not keep it up together with her regular job. On one busy day, when Connie's sister was off I asked a young lady (I think she was fourteen years old at the time) to answer our phone while she was waiting for her appointment. She did such a fantastic job that I asked her to become my receptionist. She said that she had to ask her aunt. Later that day I got a call from her aunt who said that she was so appreciative of me giving her niece a chance to work and make a little money. She explained that she had brought up her niece since she was young and an orphan and that this would be so good for her. Well I cannot praise that young lady enough. Her name was Maureen Gannon, as Irish as one can be, with beautiful long reddish blond hair and green eyes, which really were always smiling! She was a real Irish beauty but she was modest and very sweet and polite, a perfect front person for our shop. She never tired of talking to the customers while they were waiting. She gave them coffee, put them under the drier, took the clips out when necessary, in a word, she was a real asset to the store. She kept working for me until I sold my shop and moved to Phoenix in 1966, even after she had graduated from highschool, and even after she had become one of the highest paid secretaries in New York.

Within two years after we opened our store we were ready for the next big step for our family: we started looking for a house! And we soon found a beauty in Valleystream, on the South shore of Long Island, just outside of the New York City limits. I always seemed to be one step ahead of myself. Buying a house so soon was a little risky but I had such confidence in this shop that I projected continued growth. Luckily, I was right and we had no problems paying for the house. We moved in the spring of 1962.

Valleystream is located just outside the New York city limits on the Southern Parkway, about seventeen miles from Elmhurst. It was a lovely suburban community with streets lined with maple trees. It had parks and a shopping center nearby, called "Green Acres." Looking now at the hundreds of pictures I took there on several occasions such as parades, fireworks and other special events, I can truly say that it was a town like the one in the movie "Our Town." It was picturesque and the parades were typical upper class suburban events with beauty Queens and the Mayor and sparkling red fire engines from the volunteer fire department and bands with cheer leaders from the local high school. In the later movies we have Mark and Rochelle marching in these parades as boyscout and brownie girlscout.

Needless to say, this move to Valleystream was a major event in our lives. I feel now that this gave me an enormous boost in my self confidence. We had a wonderful family, a small but thriving business, we had good health and our future looked bright. I spent hours in the garden to make it look really special. We planted two maple trees near the street and a spruce tree in the front yard; I dug up both the front and back yards to make good lawns. In a word, we made improvements which made our house look very impressive. And we got our first dog, a gorgeous German shepherd whom we named "Prince." And a prince he was!

He was a grandson of a world champion shepherd who had his picture in the Encyclopedia Brittanica and he had the same markings as his grandsire. He was very good with the children and a perfect companion for all of us. There was only one problem: he could not go anywhere with us because he became carsick within minutes of entering our car(even before the car started to move!) but he would always wait for us at the window until we came back from our outings.

This was a good time to invite my mother again, to let her see the progress her youngest son was making. I was so proud of my achievements! Mother was so happy to come again and she enjoyed our house and garden and especially our children very much. We even took her on our regular summer trip to the Pocono Mountains.

Our shop kept growing. I set realistic goals and every year I met these goals. I felt now that the business was established enough so that I was able to take one day per week off. That was a real luxury for me after working six days a week for the last two years. I chose Wednesday as my day of leisure for two reasons: it was a relatively quiet day in the shop, so I knew the girls could handle it without me, and it gave me a brake in the middle of the week and got me ready for the hectic weekends. We took full advantage of those days. Anita and I frequently went on day trips and went out for lunch while the children were in school. Later I combined this day with a holiday to make three or four-day trips. Even though it was not a long vacation, we decided to go to exciting places like Florida and the New England states.

more to page 121

In 1964 I again invited Mother to come to America. She was not up to it and I felt confident enough to take two weeks vacation. After twelve years I finally returned to Holland to visit my mother and brother and to get acquainted with my niece and nephew and re-acquainted with my two surviving cousins and their families and some of my old friends. I had kept up a steady correspondence with my mother but only now was I in a financial position to make a trip to Europe. ~~We found a lovely neighborhood lady, Mrs. Bliss, to baby-sit with our children. She was a grandmother and she was the lady from whom we had bought Prince, our German shepherd dog.~~

This was another one of those highlights in my life which left a lasting impression. As we approached Holland and we crossed the coast I became very agitated. Now came back these tense feelings I used to have at times during my hiding days of the war and the fear of what my feelings would be when I would see my mother and brother again. Needless to say, tears flowed freely during the initial reunion. Mother had problems walking and had aged quite a bit. It was a difficult meeting for me. She had to live in a nursing home. It was a lovely place with nice grounds in which the patients were free to walk and she had her own room which was a combination living room and bedroom. We received permission to take her out for a day. So, we picked her up early and helped her to walk slowly to the car we had rented. Then we took her to all the familiar places. We went to Eindhoven, my old home town and visited with Uncle Michael van Lieshout and his family. Needless to say, there was much talk about the war years. I was surprised how much Mother remembered about things in the

past. Then we went to the two houses where we had lived before the war. We even rang the bell at our old house on the Tongelrese Straat from where we had moved in 1939. To our great surprise, the house looked exactly the same and we found out that this was the same family which had lived there since we had moved. Unbelievable. The lady even remembered our family. After that we drove past my grade school, the old "Nutsschool" where I went from 1936 until 1940 and the house at the Haviklaan where we had lived upstairs after the war. We looked for the Lorenz Lyceum but we could not recognize it at all and it was closed for the summer. After that we tried to find our little house where we had lived until I went to America but the streets and the neighborhood had changed so much that we never found the street. There were a lot of wide streets and even a highway and I was totally lost. All the farms, which had been behind our house, were gone.

Eindhoven had become a beautiful, large and modern city since I had left. Most of it I did not recognize at all. We decided to go to the old downtown area where my grandfather used to live and where Uncle Moses Klerk had had his store. That was still there. We went inside and talked to the owner who still remembered my Aunt Jeanette and Uncle Moses. I could not help but have the uncomfortable feeling that the present owner had taken over the business after my uncle and aunt were brutally removed from their house and that my uncle's family probably never got compensated for the loss of all his property. It all left a bitter taste in my mouth. We were all very quiet after we left that area. Then we went to another old street, the Stratumse Dijk. There we saw a butcher shop which I remembered from the days when my father had taken me on Sunday mornings to collect money from his clients. I hesitated to enter the store. I started to feel physically ill from the emotions which were welling up. It was almost too much for me to bear. The butcher looked slightly familiar. I introduced myself and he got all excited. He remembered me as that little kid who used to come with his father to collect money on Sunday mornings and he remembered my father very well. He was not old enough to have been that butcher but it was his father whom I remembered and he looked just like his father had looked some ~~twenty~~ thirty three years earlier. Then he told me that Joe Doctors, who had been my father's closest friend, was still alive. I could not believe my ears. Oom Joe was still alive? It seemed like history came back to life again. This was the man who every Sunday afternoon would come to our house until 1941, when my father died. He and my father used to listen to the soccer games while filling our house up with their cigar smoke.

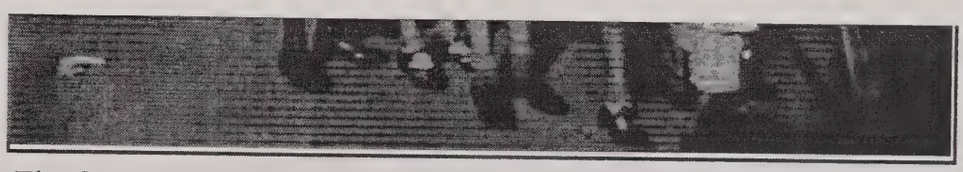
Uncle Hugo Hess from Zaltbommel. Killed during the Holocaust.

I just had to see him. I called and made an appointment to visit him the next day. I recognized him immediately when he opened his door. Except for his thin gray hair, he looked exactly the same. And he was still doing the same work: going to the market place with his cows and selling them to the farmers. Unbelievable. It was as if life had stood still for these people during these twenty four years which had been so stormy and traumatic for me. It was very hard to say good-bye to him and we both had tears in our eyes when we parted. After a long visit with Oom Michael van Lieshout during which we reminisced about the pre-war years, we took Mother to Zaltbommel, a small medieval town where before the war many of my father's family had lived, including his sister, Tante Sara Hess and her family and three great-aunts. They had all met a violent death. I still remembered the few times we had gone there when I was a child and I still have a picture of me and one of my great-aunts when I was only six years old. Nearly the whole Jewish community there was wiped out during the Holocaust, including Tante Sara with her husband and their two children. But a nephew of my uncle survived the war and we visited him.

I very vaguely remembered the town but my mother remembered all the streets and even told me how to get to the house where my three great-aunts Hymans had lived before the war. That really amazed me. She did not even remember that we had visited the van Lieshout family a few hours earlier but she remembered Zaltbommel where she had not been since 1939.

We also went to Nijmegen where my father had had another sister, Tante Anna de Wijze with her husband

and four beautiful teenage daughters, all of whom had perished in the Holocaust. It was not a happy time for my mother but she really appreciated me taking her to all the familiar places. On the way back she sang all the songs she used to sing when I was young and which I had completely forgotten. It was very hard to say good-bye to her but it was time to go back to the States.



The four daughters of Uncle Louis de Wijze and Aunt Anna (sister of my father) and my brother, all of whom were killed during the Holocaust. I am at the bottom of picture. Nijmegen, around 1933.

After 1964, Elmhurst, where my beauty shop was located, changed drastically. Gradually, the rich people moved out of the new luxury apartments which had replaced the small single family homes just three years earlier. Almost every week one or more of my customers told me that they would not renew their lease to their apartment because of the type of people who were moving into the neighborhood. This was the time of the "block busting" of good neighborhoods. A lawyer would sign a lease for his clients, usually Puerto Ricans or Black families, and then three or sometimes four families would move into one apartment. It was hard or impossible to remove them legally and so, in the space of about two years, the area changed from a high-priced luxury apartment neighborhood into a slum area. We did get customers from the new neighbors but they did not have any money to spend. It was clear that I had to do something. I decided that the time had come to prepare myself to sell the shop.

Anita and I had long discussions about this. It was a major decision. The shop had been so good to us and I was truly proud of my first salon. But it was not the same anymore. We agreed that we wanted to move to a warmer climate. So, one year we went for a long weekend to Puerto Rico to see if we would like it there. We explored the entire island during a long weekend visit and we liked the climate. However, I decided that it was not good for the kind of hairdresser I was. In those days Puerto Rico only had the very poor and the upper class families. The poor had no money for hairdressers and I never felt comfortable catering to the upper class clientele. So, we decided against moving there.

Something funny happened to us while we were there. Our flight and hotel and car rental had been prepaid. So, we did not need very much cash while we were there. In those days there were no credit cards so we carried whatever cash we needed with us. When we arrived at our airport and inquired about our flight to San Juan we found out that our reserved flight

had been canceled. They could put us on a plane the next day but I had so few days vacation, I could not afford to lose a day in Puerto Rico. The airline rerouted us via Miami and we arrived in San Juan on the regular day. But that cost us another one hundred and fifty dollars. We had no choice but to pay that. When we arrived there we had little money left for extras. But It seemed not much of a problem as long as everything had been prepaid. On our last full day we had only eighteen dollars left and nothing had been arranged for that day. What can you do for a whole day with so little money? We went to a travel agent (a brilliant idea!) and she suggested a tour to St. Thomas which cost only seventeen dollars for two people and included the flight to and from St. Thomas and a guided tour of the island including a lunch! Perfect! It was absolutely lovely. St. Thomas is a lush garden island with many tropical flowers and forests and a picturesque harbor and market. We had a wonderful time. We saw Blue Beard's Castle and the gorgeous golf course. For lunch we stopped at a country club restaurant overlooking the bay. It was just as you see it in the movies. During lunch they came around with banana dagueries. I would have loved to have had one but it cost seventy-nine cents(!). We only had one dollar and I wanted to tip the tour guide. I had to refuse the drink. The driver came over and told me that I really should try one. It was not expensive and soooo good. What could I say? I told him that I did not drink alcoholic drinks. He insisted that there was not enough alcohol in those drinks to worry about but I had to persist: absolutely no alcohol! We finally just walked away; I was so embarrassed. At the end of the tour I gave him all I had: one dollar. The next day we took our rental car back to the airport. We did not even have a dime for a cup of coffee. Then it occurred to me: what if the plane did not show up? Fortunately it did. From the airport in Long Island we had to take a taxi home. We told the driver to wait until we got some money for our fare which we had to get from inside the house. He must have thought that we were some loony eccentrics. Later we often had a good laugh about this adventure.

The following year we went back to Miami to see if we wanted to move there but we did not like it at all. We were stuck. Where to move to? I even started to look into opening a shop farther out on Long Island but nothing appealed to me. Now follows a story which shows how things fell in place for me as they had done before and would do later in my life.

I have to introduce you to Bernie Lande and his wife (whose name I forgot), the parents of a classmate of Mark. We became acquainted with them and started a weekly bridge game with them. I have to sidetrack to tell another funny story, all true. The first bridge evening we had in their house, he asked what I wanted to drink and I could see that he did not mean lemonade. I told him I would have the same as he had. What did I know! I was not in the habit of drinking alcoholic drinks. So, he started mixing and mixing and came up with some concoction which tasted awful to me and was very strong. The following week they were invited to our house. I had absolutely no liquor in the house and did not know the first thing about mixing drinks. I went to a large liquor store and told the storekeeper about my dilemma. The owner was very helpful. He loaded the car up with all kinds of bottles ("The basics" he said), all kinds of glasses and a shaker and a book describing how to mix all the popular drinks. It came to more than one hundred dollars, an enormous amount for that time. But I was in the "drinking" business. I practiced for hours and when the Landes came over I

was ready for anything. He asked for some drink and without hesitation I mixed it for him. And so it went on for almost a year. We became really good friends. One day, in a fit of trust, I confessed to him that I had never drunk alcoholic drinks before I met him and that I had stocked up just to impress him. To my great surprise he told me that he had done the same to impress me! Well that was the end of our drinking while playing bridge.

It was a week before Christmas, 1965 and we were playing bridge in our house when Bernie started talking about Phoenix, Arizona where he had been stationed in the army. After his discharge he had wanted to stay there but his wife talked him out of it. He had never forgiven her for that. He gave a glowing description of the wonderful climate and the lovely town and the mountains and desert surrounding Phoenix. It happened that I had also read an article in a magazine about Arizona in which it was described as a wonderful place to retire, how it was growing and how so many people moved there for their health and the good climate. It sounded great to me. If it was so great for retirement then it should be good to live and work there, also. Anita must have had the same feelings because we looked at each other and before I could say that I would like to go there for a few days Anita already had said it!

On New Year's day 1966 we went to Phoenix for a five day vacation. I already had done some research and I liked what I had read. On the way in the plane I asked Anita wether she would be willing to relocate *if* we both liked what we saw. She immediately agreed. She was so wonderful and adventurous. So, we both had our faces glued to the window as we approached Phoenix. What we saw from the air was not very inviting: miles and miles of dry looking desert with some specks which we later found out to be desert plants. But the airport was very nice. It was at that time a small airport. There was only one terminal and we had to walk on the tarmac to the small terminal, which looked more like a bus station, but inside it was nicely decorated. Two things stood out immediately: the people were extremely friendly and the weather was perfect. We were met at the airport by a couple we knew from our days in Jackson Heights, the only people in Phoenix we knew. They had just recently moved there and were very enthusiastic about the city, the people and the weather. They explained about all the customs and especially about shopping in the city which was already great at that time. They took us to their house. While talking to them I was looking out of their window into their garden which looked very inviting and I noticed all kinds of birds coming and going. As I was an avid bird watcher I just had to go outside. The man of the house (I forgot his name) took me for a walk around the neighborhood. I was impressed with the lovely gardens and so many trees. It reminded me of New England or the wealthy suburbs on Long Island. Everything was wide open and the sky was the bluest blue I had ever seen. We walked around in short sleeves and this was New Year's day! We had just left New York which was plagued with snow and cold winter weather.

Later that day we went to our hotel, the Westward Ho. At that time it was the tallest building in Phoenix; if I remember well, it was fifteen stories high. It had a large antenna on top which made it the highest thing visible in Phoenix. It still exists but now it is dwarfed by skyscrapers surrounding it. In the evening we explored the downtown area but there was

nothing worth looking at, just some old stores and a car dealership and the old Adams Hotel across the street. We walked to van Buren and had a wonderful steak dinner for three dollars fifty in a lovely restaurant. This would have cost at least twelve dollars fifty in New York if not more. I started to like Phoenix already.

We found out that we had made a mistake getting our hotel in the center of town. We had thought that this would be convenient but Phoenix was different from other cities in those days. Downtown was nothing and all the activities were on the outskirts of town and especially in Scottsdale.

The following day we decided to explore the area more. We rented a car and drove north on Central Ave which had a row of palm trees in the center as a divider. Farther north the street became very beautiful with large estates on both sides and trees which covered the entire road. All the gardens in that area were well tended and everything was blooming and green, very different from New York. We also saw some mountains nearby and we were anxious to get close to them. We stopped at a gas station and asked for a mountainous area not too far away but pretty. We also asked about a new development where we could inspect some homes and he directed us to Sun City. We went there first. It seemed endlessly far between Phoenix and Sun City. There was not much development north of Glendale Ave and, as per intructions we received, followed railroad tracks until we came to a sign which said "Sun City, a planned community." That was Grand Avenue. We could not believe the prices of these lovely homes: between eight thousand five hundred dollars and nineteen thousand dollars! For a little more you could get a house which was already too pretentious and too large for us! Then we asked for directions to Carefree, which the gas station attendant had recommended, and that went something like this: we had to cross the railroad tracks near Sun City, turn east along the tracks for one mile, make a left turn and then follow the graded dirt road north for about fifteen miles. We had to cross three cattle guards and there would be three barbed wire gates. We could open the gates and the ranchers allowed us to cross their lands but we had to make sure to close the gates behind us (so the cattle could not get out). Then we would see high tension wires. Follow the dirt road under the wires east for about ten miles. Then we would see another graded dirt road. Follow that north for another ten miles and we would get to Cave Creek and after that Carefree. We could not miss it! Well, we followed the directions to the letter and we found the little towns, Cave Creek and Carefree, as was promised. On the way we fell in love with the desert and the climate. The desert gave me a high and I could not resist parking the car and walking a short distance into the desert, just to get the feel of being surrounded by this lush vegetation. I took a lot of pictures, as you can well imagine. In Cavecreek we stopped at the only coffee shop that was there. It was nearly empty but there was a man in a cowboy outfit having some coffee. I whispered to Anita: " There is a real cowboy just like you see in the movies." As I am never shy to start a conversation I walked over to the "cowboy" and asked politely if he could tell me something about the area. Well, he could not because he had just arrived from Chicago for a two week tour of the Southwest. So much for our first meeting with a "real" cowboy. On the way back from Carefree which then already had the sundial and a small shopping center, we followed ~~the same~~ graded dirt road all the way back to Phoenix. That was Cave

Creek Road. On the way it started to get dark and we saw the most beautiful sunset we had ever seen. We fell in love with Arizona, just like that.

It was too early for a definite decision. We had arranged for two tours, one of Phoenix and one of the Apache Trail. The first tour consisted mostly of East Phoenix, the Biltmore hotel and estates and Scottsdale. One cannot compare that area then with the way it looks now. After we left the Biltmore Estates, where we admired the beautiful gardens filled with colorful flowers, the bus took us through many miles of empty land until we got to Scottsdale. The tourbus followed Camelback road. On the left side was lush desert with Camelback mountain in the background and on the right side one citrus grove followed another. We stopped for a sample of freshly squeezed orange juice with Camelback Mountain looming right in front of us. We did not see many homes until just before Scottssdale. I also need to mention that Camelback Road in those days was a two-lane road with dirt shoulders on both sides, no sidewalks. Scottsdale was already developed but only that area which is now called "Old Scottsdale." Going north there were a few hotels and resorts. We spent some time walking around the little shops which still look the same today. Then we drove south on a two-lane Scottsdale Road and soon left Scottsdale behind, went through some empty country, through a riverbed, the dry Salt River, over a bridge and into Tempe which already was a bustling college town. We had a photostop at the round Grady Gammage concert hall, a Frank Lloyd Wright creation, and then we returned to Phoenix and our hotel. My love for Phoenix grew by leaps and bounds!

The next day we left for our second tour, this one in a limousine we shared with one other couple. The driver picked us up at eight o'clock in the morning and warned us that this would be a full day trip. He was very nice and encouraged us to tell him any time we wanted him to stop for picture taking. I needed no more encouragement. I took many rolls of slides of this wonderful trip. We quickly went through Tempe and Mesa with a short stop at the Mormon Temple with its exquisite gardens. Then we followed Apache Road to Apache Junction. For many miles there was not much development, just an occasional mobilhome park and sales lots, but in front of us the Superstition Mountains came closer and closer. Something about this mountain range attracted me. I was mesmerized by this sight. We made a left turn and then went on a dirt road, the Apache Trail, behind the Superstition Mountain range. We would spend a good part of the day on the trail. The scenery was out of this world. The desert was so lush with a lot of tiny wild flowers and beautiful green grass between the shrubs. I kept craning my neck to look at the Superstitions until they were out of sight. We had a coffee break at Tortillo Flat, an old stage coach stop. It was a ram-shackle wooden building with a lot of character. Inside it was warm and cozy and they served the usual bottomless cup of strong coffee with all kinds of sweet tarts. As we continued the desert became even more lush. We were now completely surrounded by the desert and the road started to curve ominously. We climbed steadily until we reached a high point overlooking lake Apache. It was such a glorious sight. The weather was perfect, the sky a deep blue reflected in the lake, the desert the greenest green you can imagine and in the background the gold and red colors of the mountain cliffs. Many times I asked the driver to stop for pictures. We followed the trail further. The road became narrower and more

winding with dizzying drop-offs showing up unexpectedly in front of us. No warnings and no protective guard rails and in many places it was too narrow for two cars. Fortunately, the traffic was very light and we met only a few cars. At one point we saw a trailer behind a truck with one wheel over the edge while going around a corner with a steep drop-off, and at another point we saw a car wreck some hundred feet below us in a ravine. I was too busy admiring the surroundings to feel scared but our companions were very ill at ease. Soon the road dropped sharply along the golden cliffs winding down steeply until we ended up in Fishhook Canyon where we made a hairpin turn to climb just as steeply up the winding trail on the other side of the canyon. It was glorious!

After several hours of this kind of driving we reached Roosevelt Lake. There was an enormous dam with all the gates wide open which made it look like a roaring waterfall. It seemed that there had been a lot of rain a few days earlier which had filled the lakes up above capacity. From the trail we looked over this large lake, the largest of the four lakes which brings water from the eight thousand foot plus Mogollon Rim down into the Phoenix area. We were only able to have a quick lunch at the small restaurant, the only sign of life at the lake, because we were running late due to the many picture stops. After lunch we stopped at the Tonto ruins, old cave homes from the ancient Indian tribes which used to live in that area and had disappeared some seven hundred years earlier. Now we quickly left the beautiful desert behind and entered the busy Globe-Miami area which is dominated by enormous open-pit mines. We made a quick stop at an overlook to admire the size of the open mine. Tremendous trucks, looking like little toy trucks, lumbered up and down narrow trails transporting boulders which would be pulverized and purified to create copper. After an hour stop at the beautiful Boyd Thompson Arboretum we again went off the road into a desolate area where we dug "Apache Tears," small black glass-like stones (obsidian) out of caves in the hills. They gave us a pail and a small tool. We did all the work and could keep all we found. We managed to fill a pail of Apache Tears which are used in jewelry.

It was getting late and we still had a two hour drive from the five thousand foot high mountains into one thousand one hundred foot high Phoenix. We had to go over a winding highway 60 through narrow gorges until we left the mountains behind us to arrive in the "Valley of the Sun." It was getting dark and in the distance loomed the silhouette of a mountain range. It looked so spooky, I was totally mesmerized by the view. As we approached the range I suddenly realized that we were now on the other side of the Superstition Mountains. Again my eyes stayed glued to that scene until I could not turn my head any further. I literally had tears in my eyes; I did not want to leave the area! But soon we arrived back in Phoenix which looked very pretty in the dark. It was now eight in the evening; we had had a full twelve hours of touring and I had made up my mind that I wanted to move to Phoenix but I did not confide this to Anita yet.

We decided that we needed to know more about the business side of the city and which were the better neighborhoods . We were getting serious. The next day we had an appointment with a person at the Chamber of Commerce and this man was extremely helpful. He told us about the low salary base in Arizona and Phoenix, the lack of industries (Motorola and

Sperry were the only two major employers at that time), that the West side was developing slower than the East side and other pertinent information. None of this was discouraging to me and the good news was that there existed a substantial middle to high middle income class in Phoenix, my kind of clientele. I was sold on Phoenix.

The next day we had some free time so we drove to different neighborhoods and we were very impressed. Everything looked so clean and light and green. We both loved it. It was hard to leave the area but it was time to go home. On the way to the airport we talked about what we had experienced. It seemed that we both were hesitant to say the words but on the plane I said to Anita that I seriously considered a move to Phoenix and without hesitation she agreed. This was very courageous of her; she was born and had lived all her life in New York, except for her college years and one year in Miami; her parents and all her family and friends lived in or near New York and we did not know anybody except one couple in Arizona and we had no secure way to make a living. We talked about the risk of moving to an unknown area with a family with three youngsters and of starting from scratch. I also mentioned that I would like to get out of the hairdressing business and try something else. I believe that I was burnt out. Anita went along with all my ideas and expressed great confidence in me. I have always appreciated that and without her support I would never have accomplished what I did.

Next -> CHAPTER 13: OUR BIG MOVE TO PHOENIX

Return to INDEX

CHAPTER 13: OUR BIG MOVE TO PHOENIX

As soon as we got settled at home we made preparations for our move. We told our children about our plans. They were less than enthousiastic about it but that could not stand in our way. We understood that it was scary for them to leave the familiar surroundings and friends behind but we gave them ample time to get used to the idea. For us a very difficult time was ahead; we had to sell our house, our business and two cars, hopefully without too much upheaval. My greatest fear was that I would sell the business too soon and that I would be without income for many months, or that we would sell our house too soon and the whole family would have to move into an apartment for many months until the move. We timed our move with the end of the schoolyear so our children would not have to change schools in the middle of the year. We immediately put a "for sale" ad for everything in the paper and hoped for the best. We also ordered the Phoenix daily paper to our house so that we would get acquainted with what was going on in Arizona.

Little by little we had to say farewell to our family and friends. We arranged garden parties so we could talk to several couples at the same time. I personally found it the most difficult to say goodbye to Tante Pepi who had had such a great influence on my life and who was already quite old and her health was not very good. We never saw her again. I am still grateful for her philosophy of life which I made mine and which helped me to get through the difficult times I encountered later.

We decided that I should go to Phoenix prior to our move to try to at least get a house ready for us to move into. I went for five days in the middle of May, during one of the hottest years on record! This was my first trip without Anita since we were married. It felt rather strange. I had to find a hotel room and did everything alone. This is not the way I like to do things. I called her every night to let her know about the progress.

Again, everything went as smoothly as it can go. During the first day I rode around in my rented car and started to shop for a new car which would be waiting for us when we made our permanent move. I found a lovely Chevrolet Impala and managed to get it for a great price. I walked out of the showroom when the salesman did not offer the price as low as I wanted it. Then I returned the next night, just before closing, showed him a cashier check for three thousand dollars and told him that this was all I had, take it or leave it. After some talk with his boss he accepted my offer and I was now the proud owner of a beautiful new car which would be waiting for us when we moved to Phoenix in August.

Nearby the car dealer I found a real estate agent. Mr. Emile Marcous. He was a wonderful agent who understood exactly what we needed for our family. I told him that I had to find a house within ~~five~~ four days and buy it! Well, he said we had to start early, like eight or nine o'clock in the morning. He could not scare me with that time. He could not know that I hardly ever sleep more than four or five hours at night. I said: "What is wrong with 7am?" And that is what we did. He drove me around the greater Phoenix area and showed me many houses in the price range we could afford but it was only on the day before I had to return to

Phoenix that we found our dream house. It had exactly what we wanted: four nice bedrooms, a large family room and living room, a completely equipped kitchen and a lush garden with large citrus trees and palm trees. The house was located in a lovely residential street in what was then North Phoenix, north of Northern Avenue, behind the large estates which we had seen just five months earlier. In 1966 that was the end of Phoenix. There was not much developed north of Northern Avenue and west of 7th Avenue. The agent was very accommodating and accepted just one hundred dollars for "earnest money" to hold the house until August when we would do the closing and make our move to Phoenix. What could be better? In five days I had managed to buy a car and a house which would be ready for us when we arrived later to start our new life in Arizona. I returned to New York with the good news and a case full of official papers for Anita to sign.

As I had planned to leave my hairdressing career behind I contacted a wig manufacturer whose wigs I handled in the Elmhurst store. I planned to get into a wholesale and retail wig business in Phoenix. I felt that after selling wigs and toupees for about two years in my Elmhurst Salon I was sufficiently familiar with the business. I visited the show room of the Marshall wig company which manufactured high quality human hair wigs which then was very much in vogue. I invested seven thousand dollars at distributor prices (and, as always, paid for it in cash) which at that time was a considerable amount of money. I was really excited about it but it ended up to be a big mistake. I will write about this later.

Time was going fast. Now again, everything fell in place as we had planned it. It was like a miracle. I worked in the salon until the day we planned to move to Phoenix, we lived in our house until the night of our departure for Phoenix and we even drove to the airport in our own car where the new owner picked it up! Unbelievable! The move itself also went smoothly. We found out that each person was allowed three suitcases on the airplane, so we bought enough suitcases so that we dragged all the heavy things, such as books and gramophone records, in fifteen suitcases to the airport. This saved us a lot of money on the move where they charged quite a bit per hundred pounds to move us cross-country. We had quite a laugh when it seemed that the airplane had trouble getting up from the ground. We thought that it was dragging its tail because of our fifteen heavy suitcases weighing it down. But everything went well and we arrived in Phoenix safely where the temperature late at night was one hundred and five degrees! It was August 5th, 1966. We decided to rent a station wagon to drag our fifteen suitcases loaded with the heaviest items to our house. As we left the airport the rear end of the wagon dragged just inches above the pavement so we had to drive to our house very carefully and very slowly.

Our kids were not thrilled with this adventure. They were scared of the unfamiliar surroundings and it was pitch black when we reached our house. We did have electricity but no telephone and our furniture had not arrived yet. The air conditioning kept us cool but we had no beds and it was too late to rent anything. The empty house was not very inviting. To make them feel at home I took everybody for a ride in our new car. I bragged how easy it was to get around Phoenix because all streets were straight for many miles. Then I drove on Northern Avenue to demonstrate this. I did not know then that Northern Avenue was one of

the few streets that went through the mountains and ended up in the middle of the desert between Phoenix and Paradise Valley. There were no lights as the road became more winding and the Saguaro cacti on both sides seemed to reach out to our car. The children became petrified so I quickly turned back and returned to the safety of our house.

The next morning I got into action. I contacted the moving company which told us the unsettling news that our moving van was delayed and that we would not get our things untll at least a week later. I called the real estate man and he was wonderful. He said he had an empty apartment where we could stay until we received our furniture at no cost to us. It was a two bedroom apartment but the kids did not mind sharing one bedroom as long as they did not have to stay in that awful, empty house. In those days apartments were located in one story buildings so we had access to the gardens and the swimming pool where the children spent the whole day. And we had a place to cook and eat. Every day we called the moving company without any positive results. Mr.Marcoux became a little impatient after one week. After all, we were not paying any rent. I pleaded for a few more days but eventually we had to move into our unfurnished house. Luckily, our furniture arrived a few days later and after a little while we settled into a routine.

First of all, we joined a synagogue. We decided on Beth Israel, a reformed synagogue, for several reasons. First of all, I had gone to Beth Israel the week I had come to buy the house and our car. People treated me with great warmth. The Rabbi, Rabbi Plotkin, was great and so was cantor Chessler. There was also an older Rabbi Emeritus, Rabbi Jaffe, who was in his eighties and whom I admired greatly. The service was very traditional for a reformed synagogue and there was a Hebrew school principal, Mr. , who was a real "mensch" (I cannot translate that word but it is somethingo like a "wonderful person") and who understood our financial situation and did in no way embarrass us while making special arrangements so all our kids could go to Hebrew school. I will always remember him. Soon after that, in December 1966, Mark had his Bar Mitzvah. Unfortunately for him we had no chance to make new friends in Phoenix, so it was a very simple event. We did invite Ettie and Papa for a visit and that made it a kind of a family reunion. They really liked Phoenix and I tried to talk them into moving here but they were not yet ready for such a big move.

Now I had to get to work and find a place to open my shop. I quickly found out that this was nothing like doing business in New York. In one way it was more relaxed and people were friendlier and very easy to talk to. I soon realized that there was not much available in the price range I could afford. Finally, I found a small store in a strip of stores. It was a narrow, deep store with a showroom in the front and six small rooms in the back. I thought that this would be ideal for a wig store. I had done my home work. It was a good location (Indian School Road and 24th Street), thousands of cars passed every day, it had a good parking lot and people had to pass my store to go to the Post Office, which was right next door, and the grocery store which was around the corner. I made a very elegant-looking store and even spent money to make a fancy entrance door with a large brass door knob and beautiful outdoor carpeting leading to the door. We decided on the name and paid a fortune for a beautiful sign: "Greenwood Wigs."

It looked all very impressive but it did not help me. The passing cars did just that: they passed by the thousands going to and from work. The post office was always busy and the people parked right in front of my store, backed up to the sidewalk and when they left black smoke dirtied my fancy outdoor carpet. A steady stream of people passed my store all day but they just passed, nobody entered even to look out of curiosity. I soon realized that this was not going to be a repetition of the fast take off I had had in New York. I had a supply of seven thousand worth of stock and no clients. It did not look good. I decided to try wholesaling the wigs but for this I needed an assistant in the store. I put an advertisement in the paper but not one person answered! Just when I thought that everything was for naught a girl walked in who said that she worked for a wig shop in the neighborhood and that she wanted to make a change. I was so desperate that I hired her on the spot.

The following week she started working for me. I immediately prepared myself for my wholesale business. I went through the yellow pages and made a list of all the better beauty salons which sold wigs (mine was a high priced product) and the wig shops. Then I put a sign on the car with the name and telephone number of the shop and off I went to introduce myself to over one hundred beauty and wig salon owners in a twenty mile radius from our business. It took weeks but I did get some orders, enough to keep us from going bankrupt. But I soon found out that this was not going to get me very far either. Many times I had to pick up a hairpiece, which I thought I had sold. Because the color or style was not just right I had to exchange it for another piece and drive another twenty or thirty mile roundtrip to please the customer. Sometimes the salon owner asked me to come when the customer had an appointment to see exactly what was needed only to find out that the lady had changed her mind or canceled her appointment. But as long as I could meet expenses and have a little left over for the family I wanted to give it a try.

So it went on for many months. Occasionally I would venture farther out of town, to Tucson and Globe and Miami. Mostly these trips were unsuccessful and my intake on those days seldom covered my expenses . But I enjoyed the ride and especially the few times I took Robert or Mark along. Then two things happened which convinced me to throw in the towel. On one of my selling trips I stopped in at a large wig salon trying to sell my fancy wigs. I later found out that this was the largest, most successful wig chain in Arizona, "Heddy's Wigs." Heddy Spitz (we later became good friends) was a lovely Hungarian Jewish lady. She talked to me like a mother would talk to a son and explained to me at great length what direction the wig business was taking. She was retailing Korean nylon wigs for about one quarter to one tenth of the price I had paid for my wigs at distributor's prices. She told me very frankly that I would never be able to sell my wigs for the price they demanded and that real hair wigs were out! Even though she was giving me a lot of bad news, I liked her a lot because she was so sincere and friendly.

If that was not enough the following event convinced me to try to get rid of my shop. After a difficult morning on the road I returned to my fancy shop and smelled a strong smell of french fried potatoes. I could not imagine how that was possible. There was no fast food

restaurant nearby. I asked my assistant where the smell came from. She explained, without blinking an eye, that she had put her lunch consisting of hamburger and french fries in the wig drier to keep it warm! I ran over to the drier, which was a large cabinet through which hot air blows to dry the newly styled wigs, and there was her lunch with the grease actually bubbling in the heat. Needles to say that I fired her immediately. It took me weeks to get rid of the smell in the cabinet and the wigs and the store. It even had penetrated into the carpet! It sounds funny to me now writing about it but at that time I was near tears. What was I supposed to do? I could not leave the store and I could not get new help. I advertised the store for sale. Again, this was not like in New York. For months nobody answered. I advertised the store for rent because my lease was for three years and I did not want to get stuck there for that long and the word "bankruptcy" was not in my vocabulary. And here I had some luck. A lawyer in the area was looking for a larger office and he liked the six rooms in the back. Within one year I was in and out of the wig business.

Our family life continued in a more or less orderly fashion. One of the first things we did after our business was set up, was to get a dog for the whole family. We all missed Prince a lot. We had decided to leave him behind with a family who had just lost their German Shephard, mainly because he always became sick, even when traveling in a car and I imagined how he would feel locked up in a cage in the hold of an airplane. We wrote to that family and asked them, whether they had any trouble with him. If so, we would be happy to take him off their hands. I think we had some misgivings about leaving him behind. We soon received an answer which made us even feel worse: Prince had refused to eat anything since we had left him and that he had died of starvation. We were so upset! I promised the kids a dog, preferably a German shepherd. We looked in the paper and very soon found an ad: six months old German Shepherd for sale, house-broken, make offer. We immediately called the person who wanted to sell the dog and the next day we drove to Scottsdale to look at the dog. The house was located on the outskirts of Scottsdale, now just North of central Scottsdale, about half a mile north of Camelback Road. The man's property was surrounded by a fence. As we left the car and walked towards the house a young, large but beautiful shepherd jumped over the six foot fence and, with a loud bark, placed himself in front of us, blocking the path to the house. Since I was a child I never had a fear of dogs, so I offered him the back of my hand to let him sniff it and repeatedly told him how lovely and beautiful he was, which was the truth. This calmed him down and he started walking around all of us, sniffing one after the other. In the meanwhile the man walked over and re-assured us that he was very good with children and not to be afraid of him. I loved the dog right away and it was not long before we agreed about the price. The man gave us his dogbowl and some left-over dogfood, told us that he called the dog "Shep" and we said good-bye. As the children went into the back of the car the dog also jumped in, pushed the kids ~~over~~ and lay down on the top ledge in front of the rear window. He was immediately part of our family, one of the children. The kids loved him, he loved the kids and Anita and I were absolutely thrilled. He was a "man's" dog; whenever I was home he sat right next to me, touching my chair or hand or leg. When I got up he followed me wherever I went. After a short while he understood everything we said. More about Shep later.

Now I had to find another way to make a living. I was burnt out as far as wigs and hairdressing was concerned but I still had almost seven thousand dollars worth of wigs. Now again something happened which pointed me to the right direction. We had made some friends during that time and when things were at their worst we met some one in our friends' house one evening. The conversation went as it usually goes when one meets a new acquaintance: "what do you do and what is your business, etc." I told my sad story and mentioned that I did not know what to do. Then this person said: "You have a skill acquired over a period of some fifteen years, you were successful in New York, you liked the business, so do not throw all this away. Go back to what you know best. Do not try something you are unfamiliar with. You will be struggling for years." I listened to his advice and this then became the beginning of a very successful second career as a hairdresser. I never met this person again because, ironically the man, who was my age, died very soon after I met him. I often think of him and I will always be grateful for his wise advice.

And so I started to look for a location for a beauty salon. I did not have enough cash to open a large salon in a good location or to buy an existing successful salon. In the paper I saw an ad for a salon for sale in our own area, walking distance from our house. In my heart I was hoping that it would be a repetition of my good luck in Elmhurst but it was not to be. The lady who owned the salon was not a hairdresser. She more or less managed the salon and had a real estate office in the front area. I saw some possibility in this shop. It was a deep store and the front room, where her office was, seemed ideal for displaying my wigs. Two operators were running the salon, the oldest of the two being kind of in charge. I interviewed them, trying to find out how much of a following they had or, at least, how much money they brought into the business. They were very vague about all that which surprised me. After all, when you want to buy a salon you need to know its potential. Even though I could not learn about their strength or weakness, I liked the salon. I liked the location, right on 7th Street, a major street in Phoenix and I liked the large front window which reminded me of my New York shop and which showed a beautiful view of the West side of Squaw Peak Mountain. That alone weighed very heavily on my decision to buy the business. This may sound un-businesslike but I like to see something beautiful during hard times. It boosts my morale. I also liked the salon. It was small with three stations which left one station open for me in case I had to jump in. I was also hoping that I could keep my wholesale and retail wig business running while the two ladies ran the salon. With this in mind Anita and I decided to buy the salon and to name it "A & F Wig and Beauty Salon." The "A" stood for Anita who got top billing because it would put us farther to the front of the Yellow Pages. The "F" stood for Fred, of course. After weighing the pros and cons we decided to pay cash for the business which was eight thousand dollars, a lot of money for such a small business in 1967. But we could manage to do it and it would mean that every dollar profit would be ours and we would not have to share it with a bank and pay interest on top of that. This proved to be a smart decision in the long run but hard on our nerves in the beginning.

When we became more or less settled in our new situation, we started to travel again. Our first trips were to California, Los Angeles and San Diego. Then we started camping in the forests of Arizona. We enjoyed that very much, especially Robert and Anita and I. Rochelle

came along under protest. We did not feel comfortable leaving her home without parental supervision. After all, she was then only eleven or twelve years old. Mark did not go along with us. He had a large newspaper route which kept him busy. Also, he was a little older and mature for his age. First we rented a tent trailer. Later we bought one and eventually sold that and had a truck with a camper on top. Then we bought a small trailer. We ended up getting rid of all those large units and just threw a large tent and all our equipment in the back of our station wagon, which was our second car for Anita.

While all this was going on I started to work on our back yard. It was beautiful with four large citrus trees (the house was built in an old citrus grove) and one large and very messy female mulberry tree. That tree left some bad memories for the boys because every fall they had to cut the enormous branches it had grown during the spring and summer. I had a great fear of height so Mark and Robert had to do that task, mostly under protest. But they did it and I still appreciate them for that. I started to think of beautifying the back yard. I read an article in the Sunset magazine that described how to re-make a back yard while making use of the existing strong points such as the large citrus trees. I read how to make a free-form reflecting pool and I decided to make it between the two grapefruit trees facing the sliding door of our family room. With a garden hose I made a rough figure-eight and started digging following that design. It sounds easy but I had to dig and move a lot of dirt. In order to have the finished pool as deep as I wanted it I had to dig four feet deep and a twenty by twelve foot oval. Then I lined it with six layers of cement with a total of about three inches thickness and finally a layer of sealant. On the outside I added the natural rocks which we had collected from different parts of Arizona and Colorado on our frequent camping trips. It ended to be a lovely reflecting pool, one side six feet in diameter and two feet deep and the other nine and a half feet in diameter and about three and a half feet deep. At the narrowest section the water was only about a foot deep. Behind it I made a two foot high mound of boulders on which I planted an Italian Cypress. After the water had cured we bought some goldfish and water hyacinths. Then I made a small fountain near the Cypress with a large cement frog spitting out water into the pool. I finished it with some spotlights which made the whole scene very dramatic at night. The fish flourished, had many young and became quite large over the years. It became the center piece of our garden and it was a beauty. I spent many hours there just watching nature at work. After a short while the pool was self sustained. I never had to feed the fish. They caught mosquitoes and other bugs coming for a drink. Somehow we got mosquito fish into the pool and these were wonderful to watch as they did their water ballet in their quest for natural bait. Soon frogs found our pool and once an enormous bullfrog, who kept us up a good part of the night with his sonorous call. I suspect that Robert had something to do with that. I also decided to build a large aviary. I was influenced by the walk-in aviary we had seen during our trip to San Diego. With Anita's help I made a cage which was ten by ten feet and nine feet high. We went to the Roer Bird farm where we bought some fancy finches and also a Chinese nightingale and a fancy Brazilian cardinal who woke up the whole neighborhood with his lovely song. Later we made an additional smaller cage after we bought a price-winning Dutch rabbit at the Arizona state fair. We also bought a miniature windmill which looks like the ones you find on the farms, used for pumping water out of a well. We put that next to our reflecting pool which

added to its beauty. Robert added to our collection when he came home with one large and four smaller desert tortoises. The large one we named Elmer. The small tortoises seemed to like the surroundings because they actually had babies in our back yard. A few died but the rest we had for more than twenty years. I loved that garden. It was so peaceful and quiet and, even in the heat of the Phoenix summer, it was comfortable sitting under the grapefruit tree by the pond.

In the meanwhile I faced another challenge. I tried to build up the beauty shop. I soon found out that the girls did not contribute a great deal to my income but my profit after all expenses at least covered the rent of the store. I continued servicing my wholesale wig clients and also did some retail wig business and the girls did additional business in styling wigs. Altogether it was enough to give me a little income. However, I soon discovered that the business could not grow. The girls were not very ambitious. They were more interested in going home early than in building up their trade. They also did not like the idea that they now had a hairdresser as their boss who knew how to run the business. Under their old boss they had run the show but not very productively. I decided to get into action and to get some more life into the business. I spent money on advertising the salon which gave us some new customers. One of our most exciting advertising campaigns was when a photographer was willing to offer our customers a free eight by ten photograph in the hope that he could sell additional copies. I advertised that heavily and for the first time we had a large crowd in our salon for a while. But I noticed that, as the girls became busier they also became very selective about which customers they would cater to and which customers they would rush out of their chair. They were also very poor in selling so their bills were minimal. I had a feeling that they gave some services away or that they put the money into their own pockets. So, I started a system of numbered checks, one for each customer with a duplicate check going to the customer. This did not particularly increase their love for me.

One day after I did my usual daily counting of the money I noticed that the drawer was ten dollars short. I decided to overlook it but to keep a very close eye on their activities. I stayed more in the shop and after another shortage of money I decided to confront them with it as diplomatically as I could be. I told them that we had been short in the cash drawer a few times. I did not accuse them of stealing but could they, please, be very careful when giving change to the customers. I told them that I understood that sometimes, when busy, they had to take cash as they were taking care of customers so that such a mistake was possible but to, please, be extra careful. The older girl, who had been some kind of manager until I bought the shop, got mad. Did I, by any chance, accuse her of stealing? Oh no, not a chance in the world. Just pay more attention when giving change so you will not make any mistakes. Well, I tried to tip-toe through the situation but the following week she said that, if I did not trust her, she would rather quit. Well, here was a challenge I had to face. She was the busier of the two girls and she had more experience. Without her my little income would immediately be cut by two thirds. Yet, I could not let her control the business, not the way she failed to take advantage of the increase of business due to the increase in advertising. So, I again told her that I did not accuse her of anything but that, if she felt uncomfortable working under these circumstances, she was free to leave. Which she promptly did. This put

me in a very peculiar position. I asked the other girl, Penny Stasnopolis, how she felt about it. I was glad that she decided to stay. I think that she realized that, without her older co-worker, she would be getting busier. I promised that I would promote her as much as I could but I also told her that, under these circumstances, I had to start working now as a hairdresser besides taking care of my wig business. I also decided not to hire another girl. I felt that the two of us could do quite a good business if she only was willing to work hard and to put in more hours. This was to her liking. From that day our business grew by leaps and bounds. We both became very busy and I finally started to make some money. I had some nice promotions the most successful of which was a repeat of the portrait promotion.

To my shock I noticed that after a few ~~weeks~~ months we had lost most of the new customers. Penny simply was not willing to make the effort to retain that many patrons. That is when I decided to go back to hairdressing full time. The opportunity was there and I did not want to squander it just to be nice to Penny. So, I put myself with all my energy into building up our business and within a short period we built up a wonderful trade. I said farewell to the wholesale wig trade and became again a full time hair stylist. This was one of the best decisions I made in my life because my second career as a hairstylist became extremely lucrative.

One problem had to be resolved: I had a large stock of very expensive wigs left over which I could not sell in my store. Everybody wanted the artificial hair wigs because they were very reasonable and easy to maintain. First I put an ad in the paper without any result. I offered my wigs below my distributor price to some of my better wig stores but they also did not want these real hair wigs any more. Then I thought I was really smart: I took my whole supply of these beautiful wigs and hairpieces to the "Park & Swap" at the Greyhound Park at Washington Street, rented a space for the day and took the whole family there from six in the morning untll late in the afternoon. It ended up to be a nice outing. The kids went shopping with Anita and bought some colorful baby chicks and I wanted a large bag of oranges. It was a wonderful day with nice cool sunny weather but I could not sell one iota. One lady was interested in a gorgeous long-hair "showgirl" wig. I had paid one hundred and fifty dollars for it and it was supposed to retail for two hundred and fifty dollars. I offered it to her for thirty five dollars and she walked away! When she returned later in the afternoon I asked her to make me an offer, any offer. No luck. Finally I told her, just to test her, that she could have it for five dollars. When she refused even that I decided it was time to go home. The whole day, included lunches and shopping cost us about eighty dollars. But the kids enjoyed their chicks and we all enjoyed our oranges and a nice day in the sun. It pays to have a sense of humor when you are in business! I ended up giving all the hairpieces to a welfare shop and taking a nice tax deduction.

At home things were getting more and more out of hand. There always was an air of tension which I handled by spending more time in the garden, especially after dark. Of course, this was not particularly helpful but I loved to watch the fish trying to catch mosquitoes which were taking a sip from the pool and the antics of the frogs. After a while the pond was filled with tadpoles and newborn goldfish and mosquito fish. It was a lively scene and I could

watch it for hours and hours. This gave me the relaxation I needed from the hard day's work at the salon but it did not solve the difficult situation with the family. Robert and Rochelle were constantly in each other's hair and Anita was often near tears. Mark was out of sight when things heated up; he was smart. I tried to do the same by sitting and meditating at the pool but I could not get away with that. Sooner or later I was drawn into the melee. I never could figure out who was right or wrong and ended up punishing one or the other, mostly Robert who, at least in front of me, seemed the most problematic in his behavior. I probably mishandled the situation but at that time in my life I could not see it any other way. I hope that the children forgave me for it.

And so, we settled down into some kind of routine. The business grew steadily and, with it, my income. For the first time, after two years of struggle, we were able to put some money away for our savings. At home things became gradually even more hectic. The kids were constantly in each other's hair and Anita could not control them. Rochelle felt completely miserable under these circumstances. It seemed that she took the brunt of the upheavals, so once in a while I took her to the shop, especially on Saturdays when everybody was home from school. Friday evenings we went to Temple Beth Israel which was very difficult because the children did not enjoy it and could not be kept quiet. As the children grew older, into the terrible teens, things became more tense and difficult. I am not going to dwell on it or even describe what was going on. Each one of my children have their own version of those days and each one is convinced that he or she is right. All of us put a different spin on it. At this point it is a moot question and I just wish that everybody put this difficult time behind them and that we will become one whole family again. If that happens I will always regret that Anita could not witness it. As for me, it was maybe ten percent of my life. The other ninety percent was so good and exciting that I do not want to spend even one percent of this history of my life on this time.

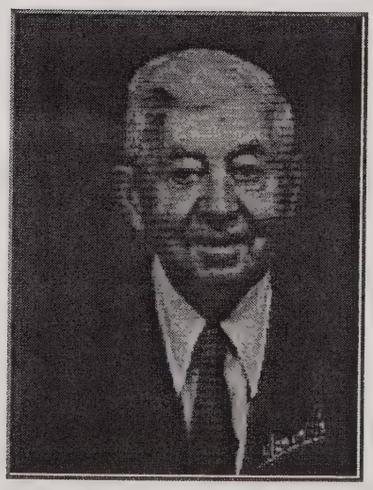
During the first seven years in Phoenix we went camping all over Arizona and occasionally in Colorado. I will never forget our first experience with camping. We were all excited because we had rented a beautiful and comfortable tent trailer. We could not wait untll we could try it out. We decided to go to the Grand Canyon. It was Memorial day 1967. The freeway to Flagstaff was not finished yet. At Bell Road, which was then still outside the city limits and in the middle of the desert, it became a one lane highway and later it occasionally disappeared altogether. We had just crested a ridge approaching Camp Verde when our trailer got a flat tire. Here we were standing, all packed for our exciting trip and now we were stuck. I hitched a ride into Camp Verde where some helpful people helped me back on our way. When we finally arrived at the Grand Canyon rather late in the afternoon, all the campgrounds were full. We had to backtrack ten miles to a campground called "tenX," probably so called because it was ten miles outside the canyon area, and there we found a space in the lovely campground in the forest. Our space was located under a stand of enormous ponderosa pine trees and there we set up camp. It was now getting dark and cold and the children were tired. I quickly prepared dinner (hot dogs and potatoes) and we got into the spirit of things. We put on our sweaters and jackets but soon it became too cold to stay outside and inside there really was not enough room for five people to sit for a long

time. We decided to go to bed early. Coming from a hot Phoenix at the end of May we had no idea how cold it could get in Northern Arizona. Even in our beds we were cold. None of us had pajamas with us, so we went to bed fully dressed. Early in the morning we wanted to see the sun rise at the Grand Canyon. The kids were so cold, they refused to go with us. We told them not to leave the tent trailer untll we came back. I would never do this today but in those days this still was safe. So, Anita and I went to the canyon. We had the heater in the car on full blast and when we went out of the car at the overlook we wrapped ourselves in our blankets. It was freezing! But we saw a gorgeous sunrise. We quickly returned to the children who were still asleep when we arrived at the camp. They really did not want to get up! Eventually, over the following ten years we tried to spend time in every campground in Arizona. Every other week we went to a different campsite, in the summer in the high mountains and in the winter in the desert areas. It was a wonderful experience. I can still see Robert, with a plastic bag hanging from his side, looking for frogs to feed his pet snakes or scorpions which he used in the making of bolo ties. Sometimes he surprised us with snakes in his bag. Once, to the great consternation of Rochelle, a snake escaped in our car while we were driving home. It took us some time to catch it and get it back into Robert's sack.

In September 1967 Rochelle had her Bat-Mitzva and four years later in November Robert had his Bar Mitzvah. As the children started to get into their teens things became more difficult. Anita seemed not to be able to control things at all. When I came home at night she often was in tears. I was never able to get all the stories straight but I was fuming mad just to see Anita so upset and so I punished one or the other child without knowing the whole story. I must say that somehow Mark was able to keep his nose out of this mess. After a while I felt that the children were old enough to be on their own and that it would be better for Anita to get out of the house and back into the work force. This was in 1970. Robert was then twelve years old, Rochelle was fifteen and Mark seventeen years old. Anita had a master's degree in nursing and had had much experience in public health nursing and supervisory work before our marriage. Fortunately, Anita agreed with me and it did not take her long to find a very good job teaching nurses how to teach mothers "mother and child care." It gave her such a lift to be able to be out in the world, talking to nurses about nursing which was always her highest interest. This took place at Good Samaritan Hospital, which is now much larger and called Samaritan Health Services. She worked there five years. She earned fairly good wages but that was not our primary concern because my business by now had grown to an extent that it gave us a good income. More important was to see her become happier and more self-confident again, more outspoken and self assured. Of course, she needed a car to get to and from work and that also increased her self esteem. Every week, on Thursday night she came into the shop after work and I did her hair. I always had made her a redhead but now, as she became a little older, I made her a little brighter red and it was very becoming to her. We started to walk regularly because I had become overweight and I tried to take some pounds off. We had now also a little more money for our camping trips, so we bought different rigs, one time a truck with a camper on top, then a tent trailer and finally a small fifteen foot Kid Trailer which we liked very much. We made some beautiful camping trips to Northern Arizona, such as to the yearly 4th of July Indian Pow-wows in Flagstaff, and also several trips to Colorado and the White Mountains. Mark had a paper route, so he

stayed home. Rochelle went with us under protest, but I did not feel secure in leaving her home overnight and she was too old for a baby sitter. Robert's room at that time of his life was like a miniature zoo. He had tanks with snakes, some very beautiful, and a collection of little frogs and some mice to feed the snakes. He also collected all kinds of lizards among which a horned toad, which really is a lizard, about three inches long, which looks like a miniature primeval monster. The problem with this was twofold. First of all, it was against the law to have such pets as they were a protected species. But more than that, this little monster spits blood out of his eye when he gets mad and that horrified Rochelle. Robert simply had to release it back into the wilds. This was a traumatic event for him. I do not know what he did with it but I never saw it again.

In 1970 I felt that it would be a good idea to re-model the beauty shop. We now had an established clientele and the future looked promising. This time I designed the furniture myself. I knew exactly what I wanted and made some drawings and plans. No beauty shop supply house was able to get this for me so I started to look for a cabinet maker. I do not remember how I found out about him but somebody told me about a Mr. Flake (I do not remember his first name but later he got killed in a private plane accident). He was from the Flake family of Snowflake, a small town in the White Mountains of Arizona. His family is part of Arizona's pioneer history. He was an excellent cabinet maker and he made the shop exactly as I had designed it. We repainted the inside, removed the partitions, put new flooring in and the place, which was very small, looked brighter and larger. I still had only one operator, Penny Stasnopolis. We got along very well and we both had a good income. I tried to hire other operators, but they all came and went without contributing anything to the shop. Nevertheless, the business was doing very well.



Charles Amsel, Anita's father. Phoenix, Dec. 1976.

Around this time, I believe it was in 1971, we got a letter from Anita's brother Milton with the news that Ettie and Pappa were getting older, that he thought that they could not take care of themselves anymore and that he thought it necessary to put them in a nursing home. He had picked a nursing home some fifty miles North of New York on the Hudson River. It sounded nice and reasonable enough but I remembered the very infrequent visits Ettie and Pappa had from Milton and his family when they lived not that far away. I could just imagine them in that nursing home far from familiar surroundings and not seeing anybody for long periods of time. I also knew that the Hudson River Valley is often dreary, damp and often rainy. In the winter it is covered with snow and ice so they would not be able to get out at all! So I pleaded in a letter to them to, please, come to Phoenix where the warm, dry climate would do them a lot of good and where there are beautiful places for them to stay with good care and their daughter and I would be able to visit with them and look after their well-being.

Fortunately they listened to my advice. They moved here, first to an apartment connected with the Kivel Nursing home where they lived for many years independently. They ate communal dinners in a dining room in their building but otherwise they took care of themselves. We often visited them, took them out or took them to our house. They even baby-sat for us during one of our vacations. It was like a new lease of life for them. Pappa loved our garden and always had to tell me what to do to improve on it. Later, when they became older and in worse shape, first Pappa and later Ettie had to go into the nursing home but even there they had a good life and enjoyed the wonderful climate of Phoenix untll they died at age ninety-two and ninety respectively. I really feel that I extended their lives and certainly they had a better life style for an additional ten years of their lives.

Ettie Amsel, mother of Anita.
Phoenix, Dec. 1976

Around this time I invited my mother for another visit. I did not know that then but this was to be her last visit to America. We gave her a great time. It was in February and it must have been a little warm for that time of the year. I remember my mother complaining that she was constantly perspiring because of the great heat. It probably was in the seventies but, coming from the cold winters in Holland, that was hot for her. We decided to give her some relief; we arranged for her to go on a tour to the Grand Canyon. The children were in school and I could not leave the business, so Grandma Julie had to go alone. She came back with exciting stories about the friends she had made on the bus and about the beauty of the canyon. She also had a very funny experience. As the bus approached the Grand Canyon she heard everybody talking very excitingly about the "rabbits" they were going to see. She could not imagine why anybody could get so enthusiastic about abserving rabbits. When they finally came to that highlight of the trip and she saw the "rapids" of the Colorado River, she realised that she had misunderstood. She gave everybody a good laugh. Soon after that she returned to Holland. That was the last time the children saw her.

By 1972 I started to get tired of carrying nearly the entire load of the business. Also, for the first time in my life I started to develop a few health problems which gave me much concern. I had gained a lot of weight which made the work very hard for me. One day I collapsed with terrible lower back pains. I could not get up. I could not put any weight on my legs. I told Penny to call Anita from work. Luckily she was able to leave work early. I crawled into her car. I do not remember how I got into the car but eventually I ended up in the emergency room of the Veteran's hospital. I do not remember them doing anything for me. They did take an X-ray and then they sent me home with a support belt which I had to wear whenever necessary. The next day I was back at work all tied together with the lumbar support and still in considerable pain.

The other problem seemed worse. My regular walks around the canal with Shep, our dog, became more and more difficult untll I could not get around the canal and back home, a

good half hour walk, without sitting and resting a few times. I had no strength and no energy. I felt as if I would collapse. Here again I was very lucky. Somebody told me about Dr. Art Mollen, a sports doctor and a great runner. I went to him. His nurse did some tests in his office and after a while Dr. Mollen came in, sat on the examining table and said that there was nothing wrong with me. All I should do is: 1) stop smoking, 2) start taking off some weight and 3) start some serious exercising, preferably running. He saw me for no more than five minutes and charged me one hundred and forty five dollars, an enormous amount for that time (1972). But I quickly forgave him because I honestly believe that he saved my life with his advice.

And I immediately started to follow his advice. Anita and I started the Heart Association diet and we began walking twice a day. After a while this was too much for Anita so I walked by myself early in the morning. We also joined a health spa where I went first three days a week and later six days a week. More difficult for me was my attempt to stop smoking. I smoked about a carton a week but I really did not enjoy smoking anymore. My children, especially Robert and Rochelle, pleaded with me to quit. All these things gave me cause for concern. I realized that, if I could not work as a hairdresser anymore, or even if not effectively, I would not have any income and most likely I would lose the business completely.

I found out about a wonderful program by the cancer society. It was given in a church and the priest was the program leader. He was wonderful. He did not bring up religion except to say during the introductory talk that praying never hurts. Then he promised he would fast during the week that we promised not to smoke. They had talks about the danger of smoking and showed some movies. Nothing touched me very much until they showed in a movie a healthy lung and then a cancer-ridden lung which had just been removed from a patient. The healthy lung was shiny and red, so beautiful. But the cancer-ridden lung looked like a large dry prune, brown and wrinkled. It occurred to me that my lungs, which were giving me such a hard time with breathing, might look like that. This got me! I stopped smoking. They had warned us that the first few days and maybe even weeks would be very difficult for us and also for the people around us. How right they proved to be. I became so irritable that Anita started smoking again after having stopping some sixteen years earlier! This made me feel bad. I felt responsible for her and I was not strong enough to stick to the program, so I went back to smoking. But by now my body already had adjusted itself to be without a constant nicotine fix so I felt awful while smoking and yet I could not stop. I went back to the same program for a second time and this time Anita went with me. Finally, I was able to leave this dirty and dangerous habit and after a short while I started feeling a lot better. At the same time I lost some weight and I felt, that as I had beaten this strong urge and habit, I could beat anything. I started looking better and I had an excess of energy. I walked faster and farther and finally I attempted a little run, less than half a block. Little by little I increased the distance and now I really started to lose weight dramatically. I got information about Sunday morning runs with Dr. Art Mollen. I went regularly to these runs at the canal road starting at 40th Street and Indian School Road. Before the run Dr. Mollen and another famous runner whose first name was Ian, gave a short lecture about running or dieting or healthy living.

After the lecture they had a three mile easy run alongside the canal. It was lovely. I soon improved to the point that I took part in weekly races and after a while managed to win a few trophies. Anita was very supportive of this and accompanied me to every race where she cheered me on whenever I came into view. I became very strong and fast and skinny. I went down to one hundred and thirty nine pounds and slimmed down to twenty nine inches! I looked like a runner. By this time it was 1976 and I was forty-six years old. I felt strong and invincible.

I am now a little ahead of myself and return to the time (1973) when I was ready to sell my shop. I had heard that Goldwater's was going to open a salon in its new Metrocenter department store. Goldwater's was a prestigeous store and the beauty salon was known for its advanced hair styling and high prices. It actually was quite nervy of me to apply for a position in the salon. After all, my styling was basic and simple. I again must say, that Anita encouraged me very much. So, one day I went to see the manager of all the Goldwater Beauty salons and told him about my background. He seemed impressed even though I explained to him that my hairstyling was basic and not fancy. He promised me a job. I put our shop up for sale and it sold very quickly. I got out of it the same amount I had put into it. There was no profit but I was glad to get away from the constant pressure and responsibility. I was asked to stay in the salon for six months to help in the change-over. This fitted perfectly with my plans, so I stayed. As the time approached for Metrocenter to open I called the manager of the Goldwater Beauty salons to remind him of his promise. I think he had forgotten all about it but he told me to report a week before the grand opening to set up my station and to get acquainted with our manager, Ira Shaw, and the co-workers. I immediately wrote to all my customers where and when I would start working at Goldwater's Beauty Salon and their response was encouraging.

Next -> CHAPTER 14: MY CAREER AS A SUCCESSFUL HAIR STYLIST

Return to INDEX

CHAPTER 14: MY CAREER AS A SUCCESSFUL HAIR STYLIST

I will never forget the first time I walked into the new salon which had the latest features and fixtures. And the color combination: orange and hot-pink! It screamed at you. The colors seemed to clash but it certainly woke one up when walking in. Mr. Shaw was to be our manager. There were a total of ten operators, two manicurists, two shampoo girls and a receptionist. It was nothing like I had been working in during my nineteen years as a hairdresser. I was impressed but also worried how I would look with my old fashioned hairstyles and basic ideas. Well, I soon found out that I had nothing to worry about. Again, it looked like fate (or whatever one might call it) worked in my favor and that I was perfectly prepared for this challenge. During the grand-opening week there was a great promotion to bring customers into the new store. Hundreds of ladies came in because of that promotion. But they did not give the operators any of these new clients. Not only our manager but also the main manager to whom I had talked and even the manager of the Scottsdale salon worked in our salon and took all this wonderful clientele and gave none of us a chance to build up our clientele. Every operator was grumbling. I, too, was unhappy about this situation and tried, unsuccessfully I might add, to talk to the receptionist. Before the first day was over, calls came in from my own clientele and soon I started to book appointments. Now a new challenge faced me: the Scottsdale manager was using the station I had chosen and was in full view of people walking in. I made a quick decision and decided to take a stand. I said very politely but firmly: "Excuse me sir(!), this is my station and I need it to take care of my client." He was a bigshot hairstylist and manager. He said: "Well, what do you expect me to do?" I felt I was being challenged for real and I was ready for it. "You can use any other station you wish but this is my station and you are using my equipment which I now need for my customer." Well, I won the first battle of many I had with the managers there and I started working. The first few days I was not too busy but on Friday and Saturday my customers came in one after another. Some even recommended me to friends. Even though I had lost some customers the difference in the prices more than made up for that.

After the first week I started to make some real money and the tips helped out, too. I soon found out that I was the only one, besides our manager, who had a following. Everybody was surprised how busy I was after a few weeks. This was especially noticeable after the grand opening week was over and the other managers went back to their own stores. Mr. Shaw and I were the only busy ones in the store. This caused some jealousy. I soon became acquainted with store politics. The receptionist would not give me any new customers and even sometimes told clients asking for me that I was too busy and that "somebody else would take care of her this time." This of course could not go on for long. I complained in vain to Mr. Shaw, my manager, so I decided to take things in my own hands. Any time the receptionist left the front desk I would stand near the phone. I picked up quite a few new customers that way. Also, I was not afraid to work late or come in early for a customer and during those times I was the only one to answer the phone. I did not make friends among my co-workers that way but I built up a large clientele in a short time. I did not feel guilty about it. After all, everybody had the same chance. The other operators and the manager simply

were not all that ambitious and they rather went home early or goofed off during working hours. After one year I and the manager were the only ones left of the original ten operators who had opened the salon.

During the second year I started to make some real money. New operators came and left but nobody managed to do well with that store policy. One day the directors of the corporate office came to find out why the store was not doing any better. They took me aside and asked me to tell them in confidence what my opinion was. After all, I not only was the only one who had survived after one year but I also had consistently increased my intake. I decided not to get involved with store politics. I just suggested to them to spend some time in the salon and to see how it was managed. I felt that, if they were such great corporate officers, they could easily see what the problem was.

It was around this time that poor Shep developed a problem with his hip, a common condition in German shepherds. We went to doctors but after a while they could not help him anymore. The only solution was to operate on him and then, for the rest of his life, he would have to walk with his hind legs on a platform with wheels. We could not see this poor dog, who had always been full of life, going around on wheels and we decided to end the life of this magnificent animal who had been like a member of our family. Anita was the brave one to take him to the Humane Society where they took care of it. I could not do it. I am sure that Shep, who understood practically everything we said, knew what was about to happen. The last time he saw me he literally cried like a baby. And so did I. It was heartbreaking. We later tried to replace him with another dog but it was never the same.

(insert: Tv 1974 etc. / /

At work I kept track of my own progress and set goals, every month a little higher than the previous one. I always met my goal and often out-performed even my own expectations. Not only did my following grow but I also consistently had the highest average bill per customer. I believe that I can thank this to my experience of twenty years earlier when I had been unemployed for a year after graduating from beauty school and I had gone to the permanent wave and color clinics. There I had received valuable knowledge of hair so that when a person had a problem I knew the solution. That usually involved a treatment of some sort. My clients had confidence in me because they received a great deal of benefit from my advice and I had the benefit because it increased my commission. After a while it became so easy and natural that I received many recommendations through my customers which brought in people with hair problems who were willing to spend time and money to improve their looks. I took this responsibility very seriously. I never took advantage of people or advised anything unnecessarily and the results of my suggestions were always noticeable.

One bright day, during the pre-Christmas season, the manager introduced a challenge: the operator who, during one week, could sell the most services unsolicited would get a voucher for dinner for two in a fine restaurant. He was such a jerk that he included himself in the race! To make a long story short: I sold more services, for which the customers had not made an appointment, than the manager and all the operators combined. It was no problem for me. I had a habit of suggesting a permanent wave or color or "make-over" to any new

customer who made an appointment for just a haircut and I always had a high degree of success doing that. The only difference the competition made was for me to make sure that these customers would do it right away instead of making a later appointment for that service. I managed to do that and Anita and I had a wonderful evening out, compliments of Mr. Shaw. The following year he had the same idea except this time he announced openly that I could not participate in the challenge. Of course, I protested loud and clear and threatened to report it to the directors of the corporate office. He relented, I won again and that was the last time we had this challenge. Too bad; I enjoyed the free meals!

Now a new problem arose. The business was going down. Mr. Shaw's policy drove operators out of the salon and by the third year there were only three operators left besides me and one manicurist, who had hardly any work and a shampoo girl who doubled as a clean-up girl. Rumors went around that the manager was resigning. I was told by the receptionist that I was bringing in more money than Mr. Shaw, even with the help he received from her. I asked Mr. Shaw if he really was resigning and when he said that he was, I requested to be recommended to replace him as the manager. This was kind of chutzpa-dicke (nervy) of me but I genuinely felt that I was qualified and that I could build up the business again. He said that he thought that this was highly unlikely because corporate office likes to bring in managers from the outside. And that is what they did. Our new manager was some bigshot hairdresser from New York who thought that he could turn everything around. But he did not understand the Phoenix clientele which is quite different from the New York customers. He lasted less than half a year. Our next manager was a famous hairstylist, Mr.(!) Michael. He was well regarded and I learned much from him. But he had one terrible problem. He booked himself every fifteen minutes, which was fine because he had an assistant who did most of the work for him. However, every day he started coming in one to one and a half hours late. Four or five customers were sitting, waiting, sometimes with their hair already washed . They complained plenty but were afraid to open their mouths when he was there. When he finally started to work he had to rush the customers out of his chair. He would start a haircut and then tell the assistant to finish it. The assistant blow-dried the hair and styled it and he put the finishing touches to it. Needless to say, the customers were furious. Besides that, he charged more than our salon prices. But his styling was so great that for a while he got away with it. Eventually he lost many customers and he quit, too.

During my fourth year one of the operators, who had worked for Goldwater's salon at Park Central shopping center, came in and offered me a job in his place in Sun City. His name was Sal, a good stylist. He knew that I had a large following coming in regularly from Sun City. I turned him down because by now I was making good money at Goldwater's and with the great following I had I felt secure in my job. But then the unexpected happened. Another manager, the fourth one in that many years, came from New York. I never thought that I had anything to worry about. After all, I was now the only one who brought in a meaningful amount of money to the salon and I got along very well with the new manager. But one day I was called into the office and Antoine, the new manager, told me to start looking for another place to work. He gave me two weeks notice. He told me that he seriously thought

that the shop would be better off without me there. When I heard that I knew that it was time to move on again. I had no fear at all. I called Sal and told him that I was ready to move over to his shop in Sun City. He said he had no chair open now but that his partner had one station available and I should talk to him. I immediately went for an interview but I did not have to say a thing. Benny, the owner of Dino's, a chain of ten salons, knew about me through Sal. He insisted I come to work for him immediately and not to wait for the end of the two weeks notice before moving. Here again, fate(?) put everything neatly together for me. Sal had worked for Goldwater's, had quit in disgust, knew about my success there and got me this wonderful opportunity to work for one of the best-known chains in Phoenix and Sun City.

The next day, on a Thursday, I went to work with a large suitcase in which to put my personal hairdressing tools. I told Antoine that I had found a job and suggested to him that it would be more comfortable for him and me if I would not stay on for another two weeks. He showed surprise that I had found work so soon. He agreed with my suggestion and so I finished the day and packed my suitcase with my equipment and moved over to the Greenway Terrace "Sun Beauty salon," my new home for the next four years.

In the meantime, a lot of things were happening at home. It is a well known fact that changing jobs is hard on one's equilibrium and so is moving to a new house and, above all, family problems are especially difficult. Each one of these problems can be a cause for a heart attack or a psychological breakdown. What if one has all three around the same time? Well, this happened to Anita and me and only with the support we gave each other did we survive this traumatic year without great scars. Rochelle had left home and left no forwarding address. For a long time we did not know where she was. She was already more than eighteen years old so legally she had the right to do whatever she wanted. But it was a great shock to me. I thought that our relationship had been fairly good. At the same time difficulties with Robert increased to a point that I decided that it would be better for all of us if he were removed from our house. I never really found out the full extent of the problems. One person said one thing and the other had another story. But it all ended up in almost daily great upheavals and when I could not control him anymore, I had no choice but to remove him from our midst. I had heard about possible violent behavior of Robert towards his mother and Rochelle but had never seen any sign of it. One day he became violent towards me and that was the end. He was too big and too strong for me to control and I am by nature not a fighter. We went to psychologists and we had court orders but nothing helped. The uproar effected the relationship between Anita and me and even my performance at work. This could not continue. In the long run it turned out that it was a good decision both for him and for us but at the time it was the most traumatic decision I had made in my life. He was not quite 18 years old yet when I told him he could no longer live in our house. He stayed with a family in our neighborhood, even though I made sure that I had no contact with him. This sounds harsh but the thought of seeing him created great anxiety within me and I could see no other way out. I do not know what contact Anita had with him or with Rochelle but I did not have any. Soon after that Robert went into the Army. To his credit I must say that he kept writing to us during his four years in the Army

and I am very grateful that, after many years, our relationship was restored, both with Rochelle and with Robert and that I have close relationships with both of them as well as with Mark, now Naftali. But I am getting ahead of myself.

At the same time as all this happened, Mark left for Israel permanently. A few years earlier he had gone to Israel but had returned to finish his college education at ASU. He was always a good student and he graduated with honors, majoring in English as a second language. For one year he tried teaching English at Crown Point, in the middle of nowhere at an Indian Reservation near the Four Corners area of Arizona, some two hundred and eighty five miles from Phoenix. He did not enjoy working with the young Indians who were more interested in working the fields than in learning English. And he felt that his expertise could be of more benefit in Israel. So he, also, left home in 1977 and became a new and even better person. He settled in Kyriat Shmona, in the Northern part of Israel near the Lebanese border when that town was still regularly bombarded with Katyusha shells from across the border. He became involved with a wonderful group of young Orthodox Jews and a great Rabbi which gave him a purpose in life and much needed confidence. We were worried about him but also extremely proud. At the time when many parents pleaded with their children to return to the comfort and soft life in the States, we encouraged him and supported him fully. We also immediately made plans to visit him as soon as possible.

Around the same time Anita had a problem with her foot. She had a bony growth on her heel which after a while made it nearly impossible for her to walk anymore. Eventually she realized that she had to have an operation. It was a very painful recovery and for a long time she had to walk on crutches. She was very depressed about it and thought that she would never be able to do any hiking or extensive walking anymore which she loved so much. All the things combined would have been enough to crack the average person. I credit it to my war experience and the support of Anita that I survived this most traumatic time without any scars.

Anita's operation was so successful that after a year we started training for our hike into the Grand Canyon. Now I had to overcome one of my problems: an extreme fear of heights. Any little drop-off alongside a trail would cause me to break out in a cold sweat and sooner or later I would feel as if I would fall over the edge. It took me three years to overcome that fear. Here is how I did it. Every Sunday morning, as part of our training, we hiked up and down Squaw Peak mountain on a trail which twists and turns one thousand three hundred feet up from the bottom of the trail to the top. It included lovely views of the city in all four directions. But for a long time I could only go about half-way up because there was a drop-off I could not pass. I often had to sit down for a while before I could go down while Anita continued to the top. Furthermore, every year we went to the Grand Canyon and started hiking down as far as I could. But right near the beginning was a turn around a large cliff on one side and a blind turn around the cliff with a sudden drop-off of some five hundred feet on the other side. I could not get past that point. I tried it several times a day while we camped at the gorgeous canyon. Then, the third year, while trying again (I was so anxious to succeed) I was talking to some man and before I knew it I had rounded that

corner and had passed the drop-off without any fear. That same day we decided to come back a few weeks later and to make a day-hike to the Indian Gardens, less that half-way into the Canyon. We enjoyed it so much and I totally lost my fear of heights to the degree that I was not worried even when I was on the drop-off side of the trial while smelly donkeys laden with tourists passed on the inside of the trail. I was thrilled and the following year we made reservations to go down all the way and stay overnight at the bottom at the Bright Angel Lodge near the Colorado river. I enjoyed the hike down. I seemed to walk with my head in the clouds. It was one of these once in a lifetime thrills which you never forget. The minute you start hiking the trail drops off steeply and the cliffs tower above you. From then on you hike through a different world. It is so serene and quiet and beautiful. With every turn the scenery changes, sometimes rugged and harsh, sometimes surrounding you with lovely red formations and at other times you hike through pastoral country. It took us nine hours hiking down with several stops, one for a picnic lunch. When we finally arrived every bone in my body hurt. We were assigned to comfortable dorms (men and women separate) and we had a wonderful dinner. The lodge is run like an army base. The man in charge gave orders like a master sergeant. But I could well understand why. All kinds of people hike down and stay at the lodge and a little disturbance would be major there. Everything at that lodge had to be taken down by helicopter or mule, a very tedious and expensive undertaking. They had told us before our hike down, that if we could not make it back up, the helicopter would pick us up at a cost of four hundred and fifty dollars per person! We were in such pains that night that we thought that we could never start hiking back to the top the next day again. But we had a good night rest and a lush breakfast. At about six thirty in the morning we started our hike back up with the added weight of a lunch pack, compliments of the "master sergeant" and four quarts of water. It took us more than twelve hours to get back up on a longer but a little less steep trail. We hiked for thirty minutes and rested for ten minutes. When we finally reached the top of the trail it was brutally hot and the last three hundred yards were extremely steep. But we were thrilled, Anita because she thought she would never hike again and I because I had overcome the fear of heights. Several people had watched us for the last hour from the overlook as we struggled to the top of the canyon wall and they gave us a cheerful ovation when we reached the end of the trail.

With all three children now gone we did not like our large home anymore. Three of the four bedrooms were empty and our large family room, which had always been filled with activities, seemed now too large. It was all too quiet and cavernous for us. We started looking for a smaller place to live and soon found a lovely three bedroom townhouse on Rose lane, just south of Bethany Home. Now all this happened within the same year when I sold my house and quit working at Goldwater's department store beauty salon. It is a small wonder that I did not end up with ulcers. It took more than a year until I felt comfortable under these new conditions. I must say that, besides the great support I had from Anita, the success I had at work and the wonderful customers who told me all their problems gave me renewed confidence.

Next -> CHAPTER 15: PUTTING OUR LIVES BACK TOGETHER

CHAPTER 15: PUTTING OUR LIVES BACK TOGETHER

After eleven years in the house on Seldon Lane, we moved into our new neighborhood. It was now 1977. I loved our new little house. It was a very cozy townhouse. It was situated on a large grassy area in the center of a large condominium complex, Villa Charme II. We were the last house in a row of six units so we were surrounded on three sides by a lawn and had a neighbor only on one side. Our unit was a one-level, three bedroom unit. One bedroom we arranged for guests. I have to admit, that I secretly always hoped that Rochelle would return. But that was not to be. Then there was a nice sized master bedroom with adjacent bathroom and the third, a very little room, became my den where I had my desk and all my business and house records. In the front was an adequate living room and in the back an eat-in kitchen with large windows and sliding doors leading to the over-sized patio. That became my hobby. The patio had nothing in it but there were empty flower beds on all sides and one in the middle. We immediately planted trees all around the house and a lot of flowers in the beds. I also made a small cage for the turtles which we took with us from the old house. As if to make up for all the hard times behind us, everything flourished: the trees grew in leaps and bounds, the flowers bloomed in profusion and the turtles had young! This was a little piece of paradise. I enjoyed coming home and puttering around in the patio which was thirty two feet wide and twenty five feet deep! It became an idyllic little home for us. I thought that we would live there forever.

This became one of the happiest years of my life. Anita and I grew closer. We had long walks, holding hands and talking about our plans for the future. We were like a newly married couple setting up our new house, planning our travels and settling down to a more quiet life. Occasionally we were reminded of our family problems by a letter from Robert or a request from Rochelle for a visit by Anita without ever talking to me. I always hoped that during the visit Anita could convince Rochelle to at least call me and talk things over but it never happened. That was the one thing that kept me from being completely happy. I kept up my exercise and running routine. I became better at running and eventually entered many competitions and received several trophies. I also extended the number of miles I ran and decided to run my first marathon in 1980.

This was one of the greatest thrills in my life. I trained very hard for the marathon. As part of the training I decided one day to run all the way to the top of South Mountain and back down. This is a run of twelve miles with a six mile run uphill from a height of one thousand three hundred feet. to the top at two thousand three hundred and fifty feet. I got such a high, running up the mountain road with the beautiful views over Phoenix and Scottsdale. On the way down I yelled: "This one is for you , Hitler. You tried to kill me and look at me now! I am here running to the top of the world and back down. You lost and I won!" I was nearly in tears and I stopped at an overlook for a few minutes to regain my composure. After that I did it a few more times but I never quite repeated this emotional experience again. I completed the Phoenix Marathon successfully and did two more Marathons, both in Phoenix, besides many ten km runs and half-marathons. In one race I came in first in my age group, a fifteen km run which I ran at the age of fifty three. I lost a lot of weight. I went

back to my Army days in weight and waist: one hundred and thirty nine pounds and twenty nine inches waist. I was in excellent shape and I had more energy than I ever had before. This was my routine: I got up every morning at four thirty in the morning, ran between four and six miles after which I tried (mostly unsuccessfully) to take a little nap. After a light breakfast I went to the health spa where I worked out (stretching, weight lifting, swimming and some arobic exercises) for about one and a half hours, then a full day's work after which I occasionally ran another four miles. On Sundays I did my long runs, increasing it up to twenty miles when training for a marathon. I was never tired and yet I did not sleep more than four or five hours per night. It seemed that the more I did the more energy I had. I really planned to do this the rest of my life but fate decided differently. About that later.

Some time in the summer of 1980 Benny, the owner of ten Dino stores, including the salon I was working for, wanted to open another salon in Sun City and offered me a partnership in that store. I felt flattered and excited about the idea. Benny and I went to the landlord of a new shopping center on Thunderbird Ave in Sun City and we discussed the terms which we accepted. We had already started to make plans regarding the number of operators we should have and the design of the salon when we got a call from the landlord telling us that the rent would be six hundred dollars more per month because of some additional square feet which he had not included in his calculations. Right away we went to the place to see what he was talking about. We were shown a little triangle in the design of the building that stuck out into the courtyard. We saw immediately that we could not use that additional space for anything worthwhile. The landlord was not willing to compromise and we did not want to pay six hundred dollars more per month for wasted space, so we backed out of the deal. But this did give me an itch to start my own business again and to build another store from scratch. I did not lack any confidence because of the enormous following I had accumulated since 1967. I could be assured of enough intake to cover all expenses plus some salary. I talked it over with Anita and, again, she was in full support of me. I only hesitated because it really made no sense for me, at the age of 50, to give up a steady, large income and job security and to invest a large amount of money into an uncertain adventure. But I was bitten by the bug and I had a location in mind. On the way home from work I often took Bell Road to 35th Avenue. A new shopping center was being built on that corner. There were not many homes around that area yet but it was being developed very quickly.

It did not take me long to make up my mind. I soon started to make some inquiries. The landlord of that property was very independent. This is how much the rent will be (and it was quite high) plus so much for the maintenance of the parking lot and security. All I received for that was an empty space, no walls, no ceiling, only an empty space and one toilet! I had to install all walls, ceiling and all the plumbing and wiring. I had to get my own architect whose design had to be approved by the landlord and I had to get all the city permits and who-knows-what-else. The only concession he allowed was three months rent-free to build the store. And , crazy me, I decided to do it. It would be a repetition of what I had done twenty years earlier in New York: I would build a store of my own design while still working at my job untll the last moment.

My first stop was at a beauty supply house whose owner and salesmen I knew since 1967. They were quite excited about making such a large sale. They showed me the latest in furnishings and equipment. I was not impressed. Everything cost enormous amounts of money and things were not designed for much storage and easy cleaning. I remembered the furniture I had designed at my previous store. That was a more beautiful and practical design and I made up my mind to use it again. But I got an idea how much my initial supply bill would be. Here, also, my experience had taught me how to start on a little smaller scale. You can always order more as needed.

The next problem was finding a cabinet maker who would do exactly what I wanted. I decided to use the same man, Mr. Flake, who had made the furniture for us in 1970 and whom I could trust to make it exactly the way I wanted it. He also gave good advice on what kind of Formica to use: for the cabinets a textured Formica which looked and even felt like real oak, and for the counters a Formica which looked exactly like marble. The only thing that bothered me about him was that he was very "laid-back." I decided to keep in touch with him constantly but at the end he delivered everything on time.

My first great shock came as I talked to an architect who was recommended to me. I had drawn the whole plan already. Of course he had to do it more precisely to scale and he had to indicate where all the outlets and electric wires would be. The bill for his service would be one thousand dollars prepaid, please! That was a lot of money in 1981. Well, I must say, his final work looked very impressive on the light-blue paper, all precisely to scale. He even drew in the ten stations I wanted. Next came the application of permits. I told everybody that I was in a terrible hurry to get everything in order. I was after them daily. They must have thought that I was a real pest, but what of it? I intended to get the shop opened in two months and enjoy one month of business free of rent. And I succeeded in doing that but not without some hassle. The plumbers were the worst. They would sit there smoking and drinking half the day. Every day I went right from work to see the progress which in the beginning was next to nothing. Fortunately I had been smart enough to get a price for the total plumbing job and not by the day or hour. But just the same, I saw my free month rent disappearing. So, I started every afternoon by asking them what was their scheduled job for the following day and when they could not tell me I called their supervisor and insisted on a description of their daily work. First it did not make much difference but when they noticed that I contacted their supervisor whenever their appointed work was not completed, they improved. I never was impolite to them. I merely explained that I was just a small businessman who could not afford to squander time and I also told them about the free rent which I wanted to use to the most advantage. I do not know whether they felt sorry for me, but from then on the work progressed on time.

In the meanwhile I kept working full time at Benny's salon in Sun City. I was doing very well and I must say that this was lucky because I needed the money for the bills from the contractor which kept on arriving at regular intervals. Here again, everything worked out perfectly. We seldom had late appointments in Sun City, so I usually could leave the shop between three and four in the afternoon which gave me plenty of time to see what was going

on in my store. One day I walked in and they had a problem because there was a beam right where the wall should be. I did not think that was a big deal because it was a question of just one inch. So I told them to let the wall stick out just that little bit. Well, that they could not do without permission from the architect who would then have to change his drawing. We settled that. Then the inspectors came and I wanted to be there when they came. That had to be coordinated. Another day I arrived at the store and found all the electric wires hanging outside the walls. I just about exploded. "What are those wires outside the walls? They should be behind the wall, of course, out of sight!" Again they could not change anything without permission of the architect. I ran over to the architect with the papers and showed him what was going on. Yes, he would make the changes but that would cost me another two hundred dollars for new drawings. I thought I would fly through the ceiling. My fuse was getting short with all this tension of working and also keeping an eye on the construction with all its complications. After asking him if he ever before drew electric wiring dangling in full view outside the walls, he finally demurred. He made new drawings. The contractor said that this would set the schedule back for a week or more. I pointed out that there was a lot of work to be done besides the wiring and that I insisted that work should continue. They really were very nice about it and accommodated me. My great fear was that they might start someone else's job while interrupting construction on my store. I got one more "emergency" call. It seemed that the architect had not drawn a connection of the hot water pipe to the hot water faucet in the bathroom. That call came through when the shop was all finished and they noticed that, when they installed the faucet, only cold water came out. Just think: every pipe and every inch of wall and fixtures were put in by me. The landlord's plumbing ended outside the premises. The architect could not figure out that the hot-water pipe, which was right behind the hot water faucet, should be connected to that faucet! What brains! It could still be done but then they had to make a hole in the wall to bring in a connecting pipe and that would be a mess. I already had people lined up to put tile on the floor and to paint the walls and put acoustic tiles in the ceiling. So, I let it go and figured that people could wash their hands with cold water. You would be surprised how many times I had to explain to my customers later why there was no hot water coming out of the hot-water faucet!

Now all was ready for the final touches. Someone walked into the store one day. He was a commercial artist (probably not a busy one) and suggested a modern design to decorate the walls. I shuddered with the thought that he might not be any good. But he showed me some ideas which I liked and it worked out fine. At the back wall he even made a modern interpretation of a lady's head on one side of the back door and of scissors and a comb on the other side. On the two long walls near the ceiling he painted horizontal stripes of different colors. It enhanced the decor of the shop very much and it gave a modern touch to the salon which was lacking up to that time.

Finally, the day came when everything had to be installed. Mr. Flake delivered the furniture on time but he could not install it until all the wash basins were in. More aggravation and more insistent telephone calls. That also got straightened out soon and when all was properly installed the store looked gorgeous. I immediately took a picture of it! It looked the

way I had wanted it to look: like a fancy large salon. From my previous experience I remembered to put two air conditioning units in, one over the front door and the other in the back and now all was ready for the grand opening except.....

For six weeks I had advertised for help without one response! I even had an answering service so I would not miss any calls while at work. I could not believe that nobody would even inquire. One day I decided to test the answering service and called the number myself. Well, when I later checked my calls I had one response: my own call! What to do? Here was a large, ten operator store and no operators. Finally, while I was putting supplies on the shelves, a young lady walked in looking for a job. I was desperate and hired her on the spot. At least I would open with one operator next to me. One more thing was left to do. I had a large and attractive sign made over the store with the salon's name: "A & F Hairstylists."

I gave a rather short notice to Benny, my boss in Sun City. I must say he was a real sport about it and genuinely wished me good luck. Well, I needed all the good luck I could get. I opened the salon as planned with one month free rent remaining. I spent a lot on advertising but without much result. This was not going to be a business like I had in New York. I could feel it immediately. Nobody walked in or called for an appointment the first day. Luckily, I had a great and loyal following built up during my fifteen years in Phoenix and so I took in enough money to cover my expenses plus a little profit. That was very hopeful. The best going for me was the fact that we had paid cash for everything. We had not a penny debt and so, every penny profit was ours. No payments! That was a very old fashioned idea but Anita and I felt comfortable doing it this way.

Now another, more serious, problem came forward: my one and only operator was no good, to say it politely. She was a good-looking girl. She was beautifully made-up. The problem was that she started her workday with fixing her hair and doing her make-up which would take her from one to two hours, depending on what she looked like walking in! I felt that she had to build up a clientele so, when finally a new customer walked in, I gave her to my "stylist." She had not finished her self-beautification yet, and so she rushed the customer, got her done in no time at all and went back to her own beautification. After she finally finished the customer she let her just stand there, obviously not a happy customer, and I had to interrupt my work to take cash. I could see that the lady was rightfully dissatisfied. She really did not look good. At the first opportunity I had to talk to my "help" (I must say I forgot her name); I told her that I expected her to arrive in the morning ready for work and that she must pay more attention to her customers to which she replied that she would have to get up two hours earlier just to get ready for work (she was not kidding). I could see that I could not get far with her. Anita said that I should fire her right away and certainly not give her any customers. But I had nobody else and I felt that I had to have at least one person next to me. I was planning a campaign to get more customers into the store but I decided to postpone that until I had better help. After several weeks another young lady walked in looking for a job. She said that she had a small following. I told her to start the next day. I did not fire the first girl because I thought she might catch on when an experienced female hairstylist worked alongside of her. It did not work out that way; now they were doing each

other's hair, including permanent waves. Now, when a customer walked in I had two operators busy with their hair and, of course, they did not look very good while in the middle of that. Also, they made the customers feel that they were being interrupted doing a very important job: their own hair and nails! I finally gave up and fired the first girl. The second girl, Bonnie, felt threatened but I explained the situation and she had enough experience to understand that the shop needed building up.

Now we started to work more seriously. Bonnie did not have much of a following but it was a beginning and she was not a bad hairstylist. I decided to advertise a permanent wave sale and this brought in a few (not many!) new customers. Slowly but surely we became a little busier. Bonnie let me know that she would like to have someone next to her. I tried, again without success. One day she came to me and said that one of her customers was a retired, very good hairdresser and that she would like to return to work part time. That suited me, and now I had one hairdresser and one parttime girl. She (I forgot her name, also) was a mature lady, blond and attractive and she took good care of the few customers she had as her old following. She did beautiful work and you could see that she used to be a very good stylist but she was so slow, so slow! It would take her forever untll she finished one customer and, if I gave her another customer thirty to forty minutes later, she let that customer wait forever. I decided to keep her. At least she did something and her customers looked really stylish when they walked out. She was also good at hair coloring and permanent waving and she was ready to go to work when she walked in! You have to look at the good side of things. Besides that, I was building up my clientele quite a bit. The word got around and, before long, I again was very busy. I was making some money again. I decided that, for the time being, I would leave well-enough alone.

Next -> CHAPTER 16: TRAGEDY STRIKES

Return to INDEX

CHAPTER 16: TRAGEDY STRIKES

Then, one horrible day, my life changed permanently. At a routine visit to her doctor a lump in Anita's breast was discovered and the doctor insisted that, judging by the size of the lump, she should look into it without delay. She went to a cancer specialist who, after removing some tissue, told her, after the test came back, to go to the hospital immediately to have her breast removed. He called for a bed and scheduled the operation while she was still in his office. I cannot imagine how she could face those news until she could tell me when I came home from work. I admired her for taking it so well. I did not take it well at all. All kinds of fears went through my mind. What to do? What would happen? What if..... I tried to push back the unthinkable.

On the day of the operation I was a total wreck. Early in the morning I took her to Good Samaritan Hospital. When I said good bye to Anita later on the way into surgery she already was half asleep from the anesthesia they had given her in the early morning but she was still aware of me and smiled at me encouragingly. The doctor suggested that I should go home and come back some six hours later when she would come out of the recovery room. As I drove home the worst possible scenarios went through my mind. I seriously considered committing suicide in the event Anita would not survive the operation. I could not imagine living without her after twenty eight years of doing everything together. I ~~had~~ hardly ever had spent a night without her since I ~~had~~ left the army. When I arrived home I was a total wreck. I felt physically ill, sweating and nauseated. I did not know what to do to keep my mind away from my worst fears. I decided to return to the hospital early and wait for her to come out of the recovery room. As I entered the hallway leading to the recovery room she was already being wheeled out. To my great surprise she was smiling and talking to the nurses a mile a minute. When she saw me she gave me a hearty "Hello"! Tears welled up in my eyes. She looked so well and so happy as if she had just come from an exciting trip. When I asked her how she was feeling she said that she felt great. No pain or discomfort. Her color was good and she looked very relaxed. Of course later, when the anesthesia wore off, things changed. Yet, she did not complain and she fell asleep soon after the nurse gave her something for the pain. Later the doctors told me that she was telling jokes while under anesthesia while they were operating on her. But all was not so light-hearted when I talked to her oncologist. While Anita was still asleep he told me that they had found many cancerous nodules in her breast and that they had removed the entire breast. She would need a series of chemotherapy treatments for six months. But he did say that he was sure that all the cancerous areas had been removed and that she would do well.

Anita made a miraculous recovery. Within a few weeks she was back at work. She never told anybody that she had cancer and that she had one breast removed. Even her chemotherapy sessions she kept secret. She did those during her lunch hour and finished her day's work without mentioning anything to anybody. The children also were not told anything and I was told in no uncertain terms not to say one word to anybody about her cancer. This was very difficult for me. I was very upset and worried about the whole affair and could not talk to anybody or get support from anybody. But Anita felt very strongly

about it and with the remarkable recovery she made I made a quick adjustment. We got another shock when Anita one year later was told to have her other breast removed as well as a preventive measure because often cancer spreads to the other breast. Even though this was a healthy breast, the operation was more painful and uncomfortable for Anita and she took longer to recuperate this time. I supported her fully and often told her that I loved her as much as ever.

But things would never be the same again. From that day Anita became very self-centered. She absorbed herself increasingly in her work. She became difficult at home and at work. At this time she was working for the Arizona State Department of Health. She inspected nursing homes and did such a thorough job that the nursing home owners complained all the way to the Governor's office. She was actually called into the Governor's office. I pleaded with her to take it a little easier on them and on herself but she insisted to go after every little violation with a fury. She made reports so long and in such detail that, first her supervisor and later the Governor complained about her reports and ordered her to keep them shorter. All this without success. The tension at work became almost unbearable for her. She made enemies out of her co-workers, her supervisors and the managers and owners of the nursing homes. She became increasingly unhappy about her job situation especially when she was passed over for promotions or increases of her pay. She started to put more and more hours into her work. After a while she did not come home untll six or seven o'clock in the evening. She received ever more complaints. I suggested that she should retire or find another job but she insisted on staying and felt that she should have been made supervisor. Of course she was well qualified to be promoted and she also had seniority but with all the controversy around her they probably considered her not a good candidate. She was totally obsessed with this horrible situation. Of course it affected our home life. It, too, became tense and unhappy. After a few years of that I suggested that she should take early retirement. At one time the State offered that option with good severance pay but Anita insisted on continuing. Finally, in 1985, when she turned sixty two years old, I convinced her that it would be better for everybody if she would retire and start collecting her social security. She agreed with one condition: that I also would retire early.

It was around this time of our lives that I started to experiment with cooking. Anita now worked every night until well after six o'clock while I often came home at half past three or four, never later than five-thirty. Anita seemed very upset about me taking over some of her household duties but I insisted. Whenever she cooked she would not get done with everything until seven-thirty or eight o'clock. Now I prepared everything so by the time she came home, we could eat leisurely and I finished doing the dishes a lot earlier. Eventually she got used to me doing the work and she seemed to be happy with it.

My son, Robert Greenwood, Phoenix, around 1982

While all these tense situations were developing, Robert came out of the army. He wanted to live with us until he could be on his own. But while talking about this his tone of voice was such that I again felt the same emotions I had felt at the time I had forced him out of our home. This, combined with the difficulties surrounding Anita's health problems, was more than I wanted to handle. So, I told him that there was no way for him to rejoin us at this point. He had to take care of himself and that I would help him with whatever I could. Of course, I was not allowed to discuss Anita's condition with him. For a while he was struggling in and out of jobs but soon he found a steady job with the Valley National Bank (now Bank One) which gave him self-confidence. He had lived in some shabby places up to then and now he was ready to settle down. He bought a mobile home in Surprise with which I helped him financially by giving him a loan and by co-signing another loan. He also wanted me to go along with him to give my opinion about the property. It felt good to me that he wnated me to play a part in his plans. I liked the property very much and I encouraged him to buy it. I felt that ownership would give him security and a feeling of responsibility. And that is how it worked out. We started visiting him and from that point relations seemed to improve.

Anita retired two months before her tenth anniversary of working for the State because she had enough vacation and overtime and compensatory time left for the last two months. Her retirement plans set into motion a whole new way of thinking. Many things had happened since we opened our salon, "A&F Hairstylists" at Bell Road and 35th Avenue. In 1982 Naftali got married and we were fortunate to have been able to go to Israel and enjoy this wonderful simcha. First we had to witness the signing of the Ketuba (wedding contract). It was a thrill for me to have my life long friend, Hans Schellekens, as one of the witnesses. The interesting point was that he was not invited because he was my friend but because he was the father of Naftali's friend! So now there was a double connection: Hans was my friend and his son, independently, became one of Naftali's friends. Later we found out a third connection: Hans' wife, Hettie is an Andriessen by birth and they are related to the Groenewoudts. So, here was my friend ever since 1949, a non-Jew, who became an Orthodox Jew, married a wife who was distantly related to me, who sent his children one by one to Israel, one of whom became a friend of my son, close enough to be invited to his wedding and to have his father as a witness to the signing of my son's wedding contract. What a small world. Naftali and Marsha had a beautiful ceremony at the Yeshurun Synagogue. The Chuppa was outside and after the short service there were hours of dancing and singing of traditional Jewish songs and dances. It was an unforgettable evening and we were very thrilled to have been able to witness it.

The next event was the birth of Hanan, our first grandchild, in 1984. Of course we went to

Israel to visit our growing family. What a thrill to see our family, which was decimated during the Holocaust, slowly but surely getting larger. This had a very special meaning for me. It was very hard to leave my business but I was very anxious to be able to go to see our growing family and to witness all the simchas. So, I agreed to look into the possibility of an early retirement. I had prepared for our retirement from the day I started working but I had no idea if it was financially feasible to retire that early. First I tried to add all our investments on paper. It seemed we had enough to live on from our income of our investments but I was not sure. So, we bought our first computer, an Apple 2C, in 1984 and I entered all our investments and totaled them all up. I had no pension but Anita did. We figured out that in 1985 Anita should retire at age 62 and with her pension and social security, combined with the income from our investments we could live comfortably. The problem was that when I retired also, my income would stop. We looked at different options and we decided that we could cash in one of her retirement accounts over a number of years which would cover our need to maintain our life style until I would turn sixty two years old, in 1992, when I would get my social security. It seemed possible and we decided that I would sell the shop and then retire, at the age of fifty six, in 1986. It worked out even better than we expected. Thanks to high interest rates for several years, our assets had grown faster than we had expected. I kept close track of our assets and they started to look better all the time. But I am now running ahead of myself.

Back in 1982 a young lady walked into the shop and introduced herself as a hairdresser with a good following who was very unhappy with her boss in the shop which was not far from our salon and that there were more hairdressers in that salon who would work for me if she (Diane) would be happy with the way I managed my salon. I was excited about meeting that challenge. I imagined that I would finally fill up the salon with hairdressers. It was not quite to be that way. Diane came with her following and soon after her one more hairdresser came from that salon. However, that second hairdresser had only a small following. I saw a possibility to make the salon grow with what I now had. I again started a concentrated advertising campaign. This time we had a good response. I soon found out though that my two new hairdressers were satisfied with the customers they had and did not want to increase their clientele. I noticed that they did not take good care of new customers, except for a few large tippers, while catering very much to their old customers. That seemed strange to me and I did not quite know how to approach this problem. I decided to take more of the new clientele myself but I did not feel good about it. There was something not quite kosher about this situation. I could not put my finger on it but I felt that something was not right.

One day one of Diane's customers walked in and after Diane finished with her she asked to talk to me. She introduced herself as Erica, a manicurist, and asked if I would object if she opened a nail salon in the space which was available next to my salon. She looked like a real business woman. She dressed well and made a good impression. I was not interested in having a manicurist in my salon and I thought that this would boost my business at the same time as I could help her establish her salon. It seemed an ideal situation and I agreed. It did not take Erica long before she built a gorgeous salon and opened up for business with five(!)

manicurists. They were busy immediately. But none of her business came to our salon. This seemed strange to me. Normally you would expect at least some ladies to ask some information about a hair salon which was located right next to a nail salon. I discussed this with Erica and she promised to promote my salon. She suggested that this would be easier if there was a direct connection between our two salons. I agreed to that and had a door between the two salons installed at my expense. Soon there was a walking in and out of the two salons but mostly by the manicurists. Finally, some customers came from Erica and made appointments with Diane. It looked good but I soon found out that Diane put a limit to how many customers she would take and what kind she would accept: only big spenders and big tippers. The others were so poorly taken care of that they never returned. Then I asked Diane, that, if she felt she could not (or would not) take care of a customer, to, please, give that customer to her co-workers. She reluctantly agreed to that. Things started to get busier and I thought that now I could finally relax a little about the business. Then something new developed. During the summer of 1983, when it slowed down at the shop, the girls would leave me and spend all their time in Erica's salon. If a customer walked in or wanted to talk to one of the girls I had to go to the salon next door and look for the girls. I asked that at least one of them should stay in our salon. I felt that they resented this somewhat but they reluctantly agreed.

On the weekend of the 4th of July of 1983 I wanted to run the half-marathon in San Diego. I had practiced for it for many months and I was really ready for it. The race was to begin on Sunday morning at eight in the morning. The girls had decided not to work the Saturday before the holiday because nearly all their customers were away. I suggested they should come in and if nobody showed up we would close early. They were adamant and I ended up agreeing with them simply because my appointment book was also nearly empty. And so I started the Saturday morning, all alone, taking care of the few customers I had. Soon after I started the phone rang: somebody asked if it was possible to get her hair frosted? I said: "Come on in!" To make a long story short, the phone kept ringing. Every time I thought I could close up someone would call or walk in. I kept calling Anita, who expected me home between eleven and twelve o'clock, that I would be a while later. I did not leave the shop until after six in the evening and I did as much business by myself on that day as we normally do together in one week. It made me think that I might be better off without my help!

One day in 1984 Erica came to see me after work. She wanted to talk to me in private. She offered to buy my salon and make one salon out of the two shops. I was not adverse to the idea because this was at the time that Anita was already involved with the cancer and we were talking about our retirement. I told Erica to make me an offer. The next day she did but she offered me such a small amount, about ten percent of what I had expected, that I could not help but laugh and told her to forget it. Then Erica, this very attractive and fashionable lady, changed into a real viper. She told me that, without "her girls" I amounted to nothing, that without her I would not have these girls and that she would have no trouble pulling the girls out of my salon and opening another hair salon nearby and set Diane and the two other girls up in business. Wow! I finally realized that Erica had put Diane and the other girl in

my shop to control my business so she could buy me out for a song and a dance. She had only made one mistake: she did not know that I was confident that I could carry the shop by myself and probably make more money than I was making with the girls. When I told her that she was quite taken aback. She hesitated for a minute and then told me to think about it and let her know.

From that day she constantly pressured me. She even sent her husband in to try to convince me how good her offer was. Vince (her husband) and I had many times talked business and I thought he was a nice fellow. Well, it became a "good cop, bad cop" situation with Vince talking nice to me like a brother trying to advise me to sell the shop to Erica and Erica threatening me and snubbing me and even trying to undermine my business. She immediately stopped recommending customers to Diane (I guess Diane was not willing to leave my salon) and the girls spent all their free time in Erica's salon.

Things were coming to a head. I talked it over with Anita who, as always, said that I should do what I thought best. I decided that I was ready for early retirement. I wanted to sell the salon, then work for another salon for one year, to work through the busy winter and spring season and then retire. Again everything, miraculously, worked out exactly as I had planned. All my experience and knowledge was now put to work and even my stubborn character helped me on the way. But it was not easy. I put an ad in the paper and, as always in Phoenix, without much result. A few people talked to me but they were not serious buyers. I wanted cash for my shop. At that point we were still pretty busy but soon I could see that we were losing a lot of customers. I do not know if the girls worked at home or that they worked after hours at a different salon but within a few months our business dropped enormously. I came to a decision to do something which most people would call crazy but I call it brave and smart: I got rid of all my girls and continued working in the shop alone. I closed the door between Erica's salon and mine. When she saw that I managed very well without "her" girls, she made me some additional offers but I brushed her away. I wanted so much and not a penny less and all of it in cash! Vince and Erica even took Anita and me out for dinner to butter us up. I told her that I was now making more money than before and that, even though I would rather sell the salon, I could last forever like this; that the salon was ideal for her but that she should not try to steal it. We parted friends with her saying that I would never even get half of what I asked.

I continued advertising and I became busier as time went along. Most customers did not mind my working alone. Some asked why this was the case and to them I explained the situation with Erica. Everybody was satisfied with it. The shop was quieter, cleaner and more peaceful. And I was making a much larger profit with less complaints. I had just started enjoying the new circumstances when I received an encouraging call about the shop. A lady who lived in the neighborhood knew the shop and was interested in buying it, to be an absentee-owner and to place a friend of hers, who worked in the area, in business as a manager. She came over the same day. She asked some questions and looked into the books. She also requested that I should stay on for six months to help with a gradual transfer. That is exactly what I had hoped for! She did not seem to be taken aback by the asking price. I

also explained to her the situation with Erica which also did not scare her off.

The next night she returned with her husband. I was now ready for all challenges. He immediately asked why I worked alone and how I could ask such a high price for a shop with no operators. I explained to him that I was one operator, I showed him how much it cost to build the shop, I told him about the excellent location (many houses were under development close to the shop) and I told him how much I had built up the business, literally single handedly. I also showed him a very good and long lease. There were still four and a half years left and the lease could be transferred. (That was one of the conditions I had insisted on while negotiating the lease with the landlord, a long and transferable lease. This came in handy now!) When he challenged me and asked me what I would do if he refused to pay the price, I told him that I would just continue alone. That did it. He agreed and we shook hands on the deal; no papers were signed. He would pay two thirds now and one third the following year.

The next morning the lady came with the check and a contract and with her two(!) operators. They brought all their paraphernalia with them and were ready to come to work. They had called all their customers the night before. Right away we had a busy shop with the three of us, each of us with our own following, and the new owner working as a receptionist. I was thrilled. I wanted her to be happy so she would be satisfied with her acquisition. You can imagine Erica's face when she came to work that day and found a busy shop. Later that evening she asked me how much I had got for the shop. She could not believe that I got what I had wanted. For me it was a great relief. The responsibility had been taken from me and I was making as much as before because they agreed to pay me a high commission. It was now April 1984.

I worked there until November 1984. My new boss wanted me to move on. I felt the same about it. She should be on her own and I wanted to go back to Sun City from where most of my customers had come. This was around the time when Anita and I started talking seriously about our retirement plans. It fitted in perfectly with our plans. I was now free to go where I pleased and to retire when I pleased. I talked to my old boss, Benni, in Sun City and he was thrilled to see me again. He had no room in his store but his partner, Sal, who had originally introduced me to Benni in 1977, had an empty station. And so, I moved over to Sun City for the final eighteen months of my career as a hairdresser.

Now followed the best years of my career as a hairstylist. I worked for the highest commission possible, I had a fantastic following (which in this business equals security and good income) and I had no responsibilities. Anita was in good health, at least so we thought, and was also making good money and so we managed to save quite a bit towards our retirement. We started traveling more now and for a longer time. We went to see our first grandson in Israel. What a thrill. We were so proud to be able to say that we were grandparents. For Anita especially it was a great thrill to be able to see her first grandchild. Her mind was so pre-occupied with the cancer. At this time, the end of 1984, she was not restricted in her activities in any way but it was constantly on her mind. She wanted to travel

as much as possible because she felt that she would not live much longer. Well, we did travel as much as we could from then on. Yet, it was very difficult to live with this threat over our heads all the time. I tried to humor her as much as I could and I kept her busy with as many positive things as I could. We certainly talked a lot about her upcoming retirement. She had much "comp" time (time off instead of overtime pay) coming to her and also a few weeks of vacation time. She could either work until she had a full ten years there and get paid for this extra time, which amounted to about two months, or she could retire earlier. I suggested for her to retire earlier in order for her to get away from the criticism and unpleasant atmosphere at her work. That is what she ended up doing and so she retired in September 1985. She wanted me to retire early also, as I had promised, but I convinced her to let me work until the end of the very busy season I would have, which was until the middle of April, 1986.

At work things were booming. Of course, I did not tell anybody about my retirement plans but I think that my customers had a feeling that something was in the air. They mostly all knew Anita and they feared that I would retire when she retired. No matter what, I became even busier and broke all records every week until I retired. I feel that it makes one feel good to retire at the height of one's career and not wait until it all fizzles away and then leave your job. In any case, my career ended with an enormous flurry. Believe me, it was not easy to see that great income stop overnight. But I kept my promise and I am glad I did that because we had six more years of a very exciting time together before Anita became too ill to be able to enjoy life any more.

Next -> CHAPTER 17: ENJOYING OUR RETIREMENT

Return to INDEX

CHAPTER 17: ENJOYING OUR RETIREMENT

On April 20th, 1986 I retired after thirty two years as a hairdresser. I had no idea what I was going to do with my free time but we had decided to go on a six months trip immediately after I stopped working. I had it all planned ahead. First we went for a cruise tour of Alaska with a three day extension in Vancouver where we saw the 1986 Worldfair. After that we returned by plane to Phoenix, stayed home for two days to take care of our laundry and to catch up with the mail. Then we packed up our car and drove for two months across Canada, as far North-West as Nova-Scotia and Prince Edward Island. Then we drove south along the coast of Canada and New England, then inland to Philadelphia. There we parked our car, which was loaded down with all our suitcases in the trunk and our food and extra sweaters and coats in the back seat. In our ice chest I kept all our film and video tapes, so the hot sun (it was now the end of June already) would not spoil our pictures. I parked the car in, what I thought, a safe place, at the corner of a major intersection with a lot of police and meter maids walking around. I even remarked to Anita that, with all those uniformed people around, the car would be safe. It was a two hour meter which gave us enough time to see the Liberty Bell and the historical buildings in that area. When we returned to the car I noticed that it was unlocked. I knew I had locked the car so I realized immediately that somebody had picked our locks. First I checked the trunk where to my relief nothing was missing. But when I checked the ice chest I saw that everything had been moved around there. They had stolen a lot of food but, worst of all, they had stolen all the film and all the videotapes, both the ones which were used and the blank films and tapes. We were devastated: we did not have one picture left, no slides and no video, of that gorgeous journey across Southern Canada, a ten thousand mile ride of the most beautiful scenery one can imagine. Even today, after twelve years, I can feel the lack of pictures of that indescribably beautiful trip. To add to our distress, we were insulted by the Philadelphia police when, after a wait of many hours, they finally made out a report which we needed to recover some of our losses from the insurance company. Basically they said: "What do you expect when you park your car at a meter in the street?" When I mentioned that I had thought it would be safe on a main street teeming with uniformed policemen, they laughed at us. I had trouble controlling my anger but I did not want to make things worse. I really felt that, if I said one more thing, I would end up at the police station. So I just asked him to make the report and give me a copy and we would get out of there. We were extremely upset but we had still four more months left of our projected trip. We kept telling each other not to let this spoil our entire vacation. We gave it our best shot.

We were still visibly upset when we arrived late at my friend Elliot Gilbert's (Kaminsky's) house in New Brunswick, New Jersey, where he and his family were waiting for us with a great dinner prepared in our honor. He was very supportive when he heard our sad tale and after dinner he took us in his car to a shopping center where we bought new film and replaced some toilet articles which had also been stolen. I hope we showed our gratitude to him sufficiently because we were still extremely distraught when we left the next morning on our way to new adventures.

Our next stop was for a visit at Milton's (Anita's brother's) house in Virginia, just outside of Washington. We stayed there a few days and did the usual sight-seeing in Washington, DC. During our stay I had a rather unpleasant experience. One evening Anita went upstairs where Milton and his wife, Sara, were in their bedroom. It was still early in the evening and I was wondering why they had all gone upstairs. But I was not invited so I tried to keep myself busy, which is not easy in someone else's house. After a few hours I became impatient and went upstairs, knocked on the door and asked how long Anita planned to stay there. It was now almost midnight! They invited me in but only to tell me that I should go to bed and that Anita would come very soon. I felt very uncomfortable, so I bid everyone good night and went downstairs where our bedroom was. It was a long time before Anita finally joined me. I asked her what was going on but she was non-committal. The next morning, as we were leaving for the next stage of our trip, we thanked our hosts for their hospitality. Anita received some hugs and kisses and then Sara said to her out of the clear sky: "I hope you'll have a good time in spite of Fred." I did not know what she was talking about. I thought that we both had a wonderful time all along. After we left I questioned Anita about it but she claimed not to know why all this came about. I knew that she was not telling the truth but I decided not to let this incident spoil the rest of our terrific trip. Only years later, after she died, I found out what had taken place that previous evening. More about that later.

From there we flew to Holland where we spent two glorious weeks visiting and sight seeing with my family. As always, we visited Uncle Michael and his wife. Both of these wonderful people were getting older and Mrs. van Lieshout already suffered from Alzheimer's disease. We also paid our respect to Ms.Tinbergen. She is a remarkable person. At that time, in 1986, she was in her middle eighties. Her mind was as sharp as ever. She wanted to know everything about our families. She looked exactly as she had looked forty years earlier, the same hairdo and, it seemed to me, even the same dress! Of course, that was not true, but her appearance had not changed much during all these years.

After that we went to Israel for two months, exploring every corner of that beautiful country and testing if we would want to move there permanently. We decided not to make that move for several reasons. The most important reason was that we would not be covered by our health insurance. Also, we were spoiled and did not want to give up the easy life we had in the United States. Besides that, the inflation rate in Israel at that time was around four hundred percent. When we found out that the principle of the mortgage on a house was tied to the inflation rate, we decided not to invest in an apartment in Israel but rather to visit there once or twice each year. Naftali took us sightseeing everywhere. We had a wonderful and happy time with our family. By now they had a second child, Boaz, who greeted us with a big smile. We also met my old friend from Holland, Hans Schellekens and his wife. We still do so regularly and stay in touch with them on the holidays.

From there we returned to Virginia and Milton to pick up our car. Anita wanted to spend a few more days with them but I was adamant in my refusal. I did not want anything to do with them anymore after that painful experience some three months earlier. So, we left the same day and drove home. We went through West Virginia which was in full fall colors (it

was November) and in Colorado we were greeted by a blue sky but the fields and mountains were covered with a heavy blanket of snow. That was an unforgettable sight. We were excited to see our trusted townhouse again after more than a half year of travel.

I do not need to describe in great detail all our travels and how we spent our time. But I will give you a general idea. First of all, Anita and I grew very close during this time. We enjoyed each other's company. We went for long walks during which we held hands and talked about our plans and our problems and fears. It could have been idyllic except for two things: Anita constantly mentioned the possibility of dying before she could do the things we had planned and she became extremely sensitive. I tried to talk her out of the former while encouraging her to enjoy life every day to the fullest. I had to do this on a daily basis. This was very difficult for both of us and for me especially as I was not allowed to talk with anybody about her condition. Besides that, at this time she was not sick or in pain or limited in anything she wanted to do. Her over-sensitivity was even harder to handle. I did not know how to approach it. There was some talk about going to a psychiatrist but it never happened. I tried to humor her but that sometimes made her even more mad. However, all this did not deter us from having a wonderful and exciting time during the last years of her life. I will do my best to describe this difficult period as accurately as I can.) begin diary

Before I retired I had mixed emotions; how would I spend all that free time? On the one hand, I had a lot of hobbies: I could paint, I liked reading, I knew that I would be much involved with travel and the planning ~~for them~~ of our trips and I liked talking to people, so I did not think I would be bored. But I could not figure out what exactly would keep me occupied. I wanted to contribute something meaningful in some way to something, I wanted to make a difference, maybe even leave a lasting legacy, but I had no idea what it could be. On the other hand, I had heard that some people became depressed and difficult when they were home all day. I definitely did not want to go through that. I also thought that I might do something with my photography, give more slide shows like the ones I had been giving for the last ten years or do some kind of teaching. All this went through my mind as the time of my retirement approached. So, when we finally settled down after our six months hiatus I started to look into activities for me to do.

By now I was used to "leisure time" without the routine of a working person. Yet, I had not found a way to keep myself occupied. Here Anita was a great inspiration. She wanted to join the Plotkin Judaica Museum and become a tour guide there. She had gone there several times between the time of her retirement and mine and now she wanted to go to the classes regularly. She said that these were interesting and informative classes and that I would enjoy them, also, and that I should give it a chance. The first time I went reluctantly. I did not know what to expect. By chance that year the museum was preparing the opening of the Anne Frank exhibit and Rabbi Plotkin was giving a background talk on the history of Dutch Jewry and the Holocaust. As I was listening to him I became very agitated. I had never talked about my life during the war to anybody and now, listening to the Rabbi talk, I felt every memory coming back. Anita whispered to me that I should tell him that I had come from Holland but I could not do it. So, she brought it up and told the group that I had spent

the war years in Holland. Rabbi Plotkin immediately interrupted his talk and asked me to talk to the group about my experiences. I said that I could not. I am sure that they noticed that I was visibly shaken. So, he went on with his presentation but after the class Sylvia Plotkin, his wife, came over to me and said that I would have much to contribute to the class and the show. After all, she remarked, who could talk better about the war years than someone who personally had gone through it? I still declined but Sylvia had her unique ways and somehow, the following week, I talked to our docents for an hour about my experiences. It was very difficult for me and several times I had to stop for a minute as my emotions ran out of control. Everybody was very supportive and understanding and afterwards everybody thanked me and said they appreciated my sharing my story with them. Sylvia said she was surprised that I could talk so well in public (I told you she had a unique way with people!) and when I told her that I was used to talk in public as I was giving slide shows regularly, she suggested that I should talk about the war to groups visiting the exhibit. I did not make any promises but soon after the exhibit opened Sylvia called and said that a group of high school youngsters were booked for a tour and that I would be the person to tour them. I reluctantly agreed.

For the following three months I talked to groups about the war one to three times a day. Normally docents are not allowed to lead a group until they had been in training for two years, but Sylvia not only made me an exception, she also booked me as much as she could. Now I did not refuse anymore; I had found a way to stay busy in my retirement. I toured groups as small as eight and as large as forty people at a time. I had no trouble keeping their attention but I did have trouble controlling my emotions. At some point or another, not always at the same point, I had to swallow hard to control my tears. It was all very emotional but I finally talked. Since then I have given presentations for high school classes and retreats of as many as two hundred students and have given interviews to newspapers, a radio station and a TV program. Most importantly, I have participated in a taping of a video about how Holocaust survivors have adjusted to normal life after the war. That tape goes around the country to all the high schools and will be circulating from now on. It is also a part of the Holocaust Museum library in Washington DC. So, hereby I fulfilled my dream to make a difference and to leave a lasting imprint on at least a few people. I am so grateful for that, ~~because~~ Not everybody gets that chance.

This was only the beginning. I went to all the museum classes and after the Anne Frank exhibit closed Sylvia continued asking me to do tours. I became really involved with the museum. When she found out that I was good at photography she put me to work with that. I made some pictures of new acquisitions but more than that, I made fourteen videos of shows the museum had and of trips we made to Israel and interviews I did with Israeli artists and a slide show showing the various aspects of life in Israel. I also wrote the script for the latter. These are all in the museum and I am thrilled that these are a part of the permanent collection.

At the same time Anita became involved in "Sun Sound Radio," a radio show for home bound and print handicapped people. All people working there, except for the director, were

volunteers. Again Anita encouraged me to come along with her for an interview and a sound test of our voices. We both passed that test and the director seemed to be anxious to have us join the station. There were two openings available: one for reading art magazines in the studio and the other a travel show done on the road. The latter was just what I wanted. From 1987 until the middle of 1992, when Anita became so ill that I had to take care of her one hundred percent, we traveled and went to all kinds of exciting places which I described on my little tape recorder. I was the eyes and ears of the listeners, who got their special receivers free of charge from Sun Sound Radio. I had to do fifty weekly half hour shows per year. This turned out to be a thrilling experience. At local events Anita went with me and prepared the person to be interviewed with what I was doing. That was a great help for me so I could start my interview without any ado. I also had a press pass so that we went behind the scenes of state fairs, balloon races, rodeos and other sporting and cultural events. While traveling I often had my video camera in one hand and the audio recorder in the other hand. I interviewed governors, mayors and many famous sport and cultural figures. It ended up to be one of the more exciting times of our lives and it also helped us to grow closer as we spent so many exceptional moments together. After coming home with the twenty-five to twenty-seven minute tapes I transferred these on another tape on which I had prepared my short introduction with the background of the music of "Around the World in Eighty Days." My greatest reward for all that work came when one of the listeners, who was totally blind, said that, while listening to my report during an open house at Luke Air Force Base, she felt as if she were there and could see the planes going through their demonstrations. I felt I had done my job well.

And so we were pretty busy with all these wonderful activities. Retirement became a fun time and has been such ever since. I became gradually more involved with all these volunteer jobs, so much so that between these and my work-outs at the spa I was busy from morning to night and often even during the night. I did not sleep much anyway and many nights I would sit up for hours working on a report for the docents or preparing a book review, another one of my activities. The marathons and other competitions I had to stop doing. I developed a bad cough during the training for the 1986 marathon. I had to reduce my long distance runs to the point that I realized that I would not be able to run that marathon. While in Israel I had a terrible coughing attack which kept me up all night. The next day, while walking up a slight incline in Jerusalem, I had to stop walking and nearly collapsed. I thought that I might have lung-cancer. Marcia, Naftali's wife, who has a bad case of asthma, made an appointment for me with her doctor. After examining me he told me that I, too, had asthma and he put me immediately on two medications. I was relieved to know that I did not have cancer but I also had to make an adjustment in my life style to accommodate the limitations asthma put on me. The medications gave me instant relief but I could not run anymore. I had to stop all running but I kept working out. I concentrated now on speed walking and swimming. I did well enough in the latter to win several medals while competing in the senior Olympics in Arizona. I have kept up the regular workouts although, after getting a ruptured disk a few years later, I gave up all competitions. I still miss these but I thank G'd that he had given me the ability to do it for a few years and to have the wonderful memories.

Yet, I felt that there was something missing. My religious life was in shambles. I only went to the Synagogue on the High Holidays (Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur). I did believe in a G'd but I was mad at G'd for what had happened during the Holocaust. For several years now, when I was supposed to ask G'd for forgiveness of my sins I would instead deep in my mind demand from G'd to ask me to forgive Him for the death of so many in my family, especially for the death of my oldest brother Hans, and for the murder of so many millions of the Jews in Europe. Eventually I resolved this dilemma within myself.

Every time we went to Israel I went with Naftali to an Orthodox synagogue. I felt uncomfortable with the service because it was mostly unfamiliar to me. Often I was asked to perform one of the rituals of the service because I am a Levi. Levites used to aid in the Temple service during the Temple days and now we still perform special rituals. However, I always had to decline the honor simply because I did not know what to do or how to recite the prayers and I had no clue what it all meant. I asked Naftali questions and I must say that he had much to do with my return to our traditions.

1988 was an important year in that respect. We had come home from Israel after a stay during the High Holiday season. What we experienced there combined with what I had learned in the museum made me more curious than ever. Strangely enough, at the museum, which is affiliated with a Reformed Temple, we were taught all the traditions the proper way. The more I learned the more I realized how little I knew and how much more there was to be acquainted with. One day I toured a group of Orthodox youngsters and their teacher, Rabbi Cooperman of the Hebrew Academy, who exclaimed that he was so glad to have a male tour guide. This struck me as funny because I did not know the museum as well as Sylvia Plotkin or some of the other old-time female docents. So, I did the best I could with the show, which was about King David and the psalms, until the Rabbi asked one of the youngsters to read one of the psalms. It appeared that he knew it by heart and the Rabbi proceeded to give some explanations. I felt totally inadequate and I asked the Rabbi to continue his teaching while I listened and learned. Right then and there I decided that I did not want to be an ignoramus of our traditions any more and I started giving the study of our religion all the time I had left during the day and, again, often for many hours during the night.

The following year, while in Israel, I bought the pocket sized edition of the Artscroll Sidur which has an almost literal translation of the prayers and a lot of commentaries and instructions as to what to do and how and when. I even taught myself to read the Hebrew. Because of the war I had interrupted my Hebrew lessons when I was twelve years old and barely knew the aleph-beit, the Hebrew alphabet. With this little bit of knowledge I figured out word for word how to pronounce the prayers. Anita, as always, was very encouraging and bought me some books explaining the prayers and rituals. She also encouraged me to join with her in the Talmud classes which were at that time given by Dr. Joel Gereboff in a Temple Beth Israel classroom. After a while I felt comfortable enough to prepare some programs on our religion for the docents. One was about our history between the first and

second Temple days, one was on the layout of the Talmud and how it came about (that one was particularly difficult), and one about some of the ritual items such as the Tallith and the Tefillin. It gave me great pleasure that often Rabbi Plotkin would sit in part of the time during my lectures and showed me his approval.

But now a new problem developed. As I understood our customs and laws better, I also felt very much the lack of the rituals in the Reformed service. I became very annoyed with that to the point that I finally decided to make a break with Temple Beth Israel, which I had joined in 1966, and now we became members of Congregation Beth El, a conservative synagogue with the very traditional Rabbi Silberman. We became acquainted with the Rabbi when Anita's father had died in 1981. Rabbi Silberman, who led some services at Kivel Nursing home where my in-laws had lived for many years, is a real "mensch" and at my father-in-law's funeral he made a beautiful speech which made us all feel at peace. Anita had already gone to his service at Beth El since we had come back from Israel and she encouraged me to at least try it for a couple of Shabbaths. Well, I immediately felt at home there for two reasons: first and foremost, the service was very close to the Orthodox service I had participated in so many times in Israel and which reminded me of what little I remembered from before the war which had stopped it all. And then, to my surprise, I knew more people at Beth El than I knew at Beth Israel after twenty-two years. Some I knew from my health spa, some from the Holocaust Association and a few even from the museum. So, I immediately received a hearty welcome and Rabbi Silberman gave me the Levi aliyah on my first visit, one of the honors for a Levi. I felt elated, even though I was embarrassed that I still did not know the prayers and special blessings very well. But I had found a Jewish religious home.

It was extremely hard for me to tell Sylvia and Rabbi Plotkin, who by now were like friends to me, that I had to quit their synagogue. But I told them exactly how I felt and they were very gracious about it and said that they hoped that I would come again once in a while to their service. As a matter of fact, several times, after we quit, Rabbi Plotkin invited me for an honor during the Friday night service, which I accepted. Sylvia faced a problem because the by-laws of the museum required the docents to be members of Beth Israel as well. I must say that I felt flattered when she told me that she had called for a special meeting of the museum board during which, at her prodding, they changed the by-laws so I could remain a docent (I told you that she had her special way). Later they had many more docents who were not members of Beth Israel. I was very happy with that decision because I believe in that museum which does a marvelous teaching job and reaches out to the community. And now I gave all my available time to the study of anything Judaica. I lectured, gave book reviews, made many video tapes and sometimes toured four to five times a week. I was busy! Not only with my studies and volunteer work but also traveling, preparing for the travels, arranging the thousands of slides I had taken of the travels(I have over twenty two thousand catalogued slides) and giving slide shows of our trips. I also still competed, now only in swimming, for which I received a silver medal in the Senior Olympics for second place overall in the one mile race. I was physically and mentally in the best shape ever. I did not know then how well this prepared me for later very difficult and trying years.

We had a very good life during those years. We made many friends and acquaintances, were members of two Chavuroth (synagogue groups who met monthly and discussed Jewish subjects), we traveled a lot, learned a lot and worked out a lot in the healthspa. I became a member of three different committees at Beth El, one was the ritual committee, another the education committee, and I was the chairman of the Library committee. The latter was especially interesting because Beth El had just built a new library in the (at that time new) Schurgin Building. I was then in charge of furnishing and setting up the new library. Just think where I received my original experience in library work: in the army when I had walked away from the daily work detail!

Needless to say that we were busy all the time. We had a good and pleasant life. Then, one day in 1989, Anita complained of backaches which became very severe and persistent. It was very noticeable but I ignored it mostly. I had noticed that she was walking improperly. She had a strange, unbalanced gate and during our walks I often reminded her to walk straight or to hold her back straight. But she said that she simply could not do that. The pain became gradually worse. I encouraged her to do some special exercises which I had learned during the years I had back problems. She tried but I could see that this was not working. In the spa she did less and less and at a slower pace. I suggested that she should get some massages. That would do her good. She actually had an appointment for such a massage the day after she decided to see a doctor. The doctor told her to cancel that appointment until he saw an ex-ray of her back. After that he ordered an MRI and when he saw that he sent her back to her oncologist. There she received the bad news: she had bone cancer! The cancer had spread to the back of her head and over a major part of her back. We were devastated. There is no way to describe the sick feeling in the pit of your stomach when you hear that awful C-word, now for the second time. I tried to keep her spirits up as much as I could but she was very depressed.

I do not want to go too deeply into the next three and a half years. I think that it is important, though, that you should know what we went through, so without going into too great a detail I will try to describe this very difficult time.

First of all, Anita stressed that I should not mention a word about her condition to anybody. In public she put up a brave act as long as she could. Nobody realized the enormous pain and emotional suffering she went through. There was a gradual and unrelenting breakdown. First, she walked slower and slower and started complaining that I parked too far from where we had to go. She took stronger medications to fight off the pain but as time went on this, too, did not work. We still went to all the activities but it became very difficult and everything took more time. On one of the visits I asked the doctor if we could get a temporary "handicap" sign for our car so we could park closer to where we had to go. He agreed and filled in a form. But Anita was too proud to accept it right away though it was not long before she gave in and we went to the county-office where they immediately issued her the permit. It was a sad day when we put that sign in our car window. That same day we bought a walker for her. She could not walk anymore without that support.

In 1991 we had to buy a new car. Anita could not get in and out of our little Chrysler we then had. We opted for a Volvo (a very good decision). This was much more comfortable for her. She had gained weight enormously so it was good that we had a roomier car. Emotionally, it must have been a tremendous strain on her. It came now to the point that she could not stand for any length of time, so I had to do all the shopping, cooking, cleaning and everything else. The first thing she had to give up was Sun Sound Radio. It was so sad to see her say good-bye to the people with whom she had worked. She told them she would come back as soon as she felt better. No word was spoken about her condition; it was just a back pain. Her doctor had suggested that, if the pain became unbearable, she could get radiation which would relieve the pain. She refused but she accepted a "Tense" unit which consisted of patches which I had to apply to her back, through which minute electric shocks went which fooled her brain into thinking that there was a minor pain elsewhere, not where the real problem was.

One day we went to Laughlin, where we had gone once a month for the last three years. It was just for two nights and we went with friends whom she liked very much. The first night she had terrible pains and I suggested that we should go home earlier. She refused and put on a good act the next day in front of her friends. She did mention her pain and she received much sympathy from our friends but she never mentioned the cancer. That evening she had such pains that she had to stay in the room so that nobody would notice it. That night the pain was so intense that she could not sleep. I insisted that we should wake up our friends and drive home at night (I was the driver) but she was adamant. However, she agreed that I would call her oncologist early in the morning to get an emergency appointment with him. And so, we drove home the next day under great tension. Our friends were not aware of the seriousness of our situation. We dropped our friends off and went straight to the doctor where we arrived at five o'clock. He insisted that the time had come for drastic measures and that she needed chemotherapy treatments again. That very day she started her first of many treatments. Even though she lived for another eighteen months, this was the beginning of the end. We knew it but, I think, that we both were in a state of denial.

The doctor had ordered another MRI. The results were shocking: the MRI showed black blotches (the cancer) at the base of her skull, down her neck and spine and on several of her ribs. It had spread all over. It became worse. We kept going to the museum and the synagogue and our chavurah meetings, the only activities she still wanted to do. But she had to sit all the time. It became very noticeable that she was in bad pain. One time, when Sylvia Plotkin and I were alone in the museum, Sylvia asked me about her condition. I was not allowed to talk about it and suddenly tears welled up in my eyes. I could not answer her but Sylvia understood. She consoled me as best as she could and then I decided I had to tell somebody and Sylvia was the best person in whom to confide. And so, I told her while making her promise never to let Anita know that I was sharing my concerns with her. Ironically, a few years after Anita's death, Sylvia died of the same disease.

Now things grew from bad to worse. Anita came to the point where she had to use the

walker to get around most of the time. I still insisted that we continue to go on our regular evening walks but it was painful for Anita physically and for me emotionally. She walked, leaning on her walker, one step at a time. Needless to say, the walks were gradually shortened and finally they came to a halt. It was a very difficult time for both of us.

One day the pain was so bad that we went for an emergency call to the doctor who then suggested that Anita should get radiation treatment. We asked what that would do for her and the doctor explained that it would diminish the pain at least at the radiated site. We talked about it but I did not want to encourage or discourage her in any way. Only she could determine how bad the pain was and if she wanted to try a treatment that certainly had a degree of risk attached to it. And so, one awful day I took her to the radiation department of Good Samaritan Health Services. It was a depressing place. To get to her area we had to walk through a room where children with cancer were counciled and treated. Most had lost all their hair. That was bad enough. Then Anita had to lie down on a table and turn over a few times so the nurse could mark the spot where the radiation would take place. This was extremely painful for her. I knew that this was very critical and that one little mistake could ruin Anita for the rest of her life. I had expected the doctor to mark those spots but he was not in sight. I was very fearful for Anita and talked to the receptionist and insisted that a doctor would check her out before they would start the radiation treatment. Well, someone did and in she went for the radiation. If I remember well, she received radiation three times during a period of a week. Believe me, it was a major undertaking to get her in and out of the car and into the clinic. I tried to keep her cheerful but I was not successful. Anita became gradually more and more depressed and also very difficult. They also put her on stronger pain medication which made her sleep practically all the time. She now walked so poorly that I had to help her everywhere she went.

One day, after I had helped her to go to the bathroom and I was waiting for her to tell me that I should help her to get out again, I heard some strange noises. I ran to the bathroom and there she was slumped over between the toilet and the bathtub. I was desperate. She was so heavy. I barely could get her up. She was not hurt in any way but she did not have the strength to walk even with my help. I brought a chair into the hallway and helped her into the chair where she just slumped over. I went to the phone and called 911 while keeping an eye on her. I must say that the emergency crew of the fire department was wonderful. They were there within minutes, immediately took her vital signs and , while they were doing that, the ambulance already backed up outside our gate. Within a short time they had her in the ambulance and she was on the way to the hospital. I could have gone with her in the ambulance but I decided to follow her in my car, so I would be free to go where necessary.

This was my first, but by no means the last time that I had to follow the ambulance with Anita inside. It is the most awful sensation. I was physically ill and shaking when I arrived at the emergency entrance of the hospital. Before I knew it I was sitting there signing all kinds of documents. We had signed a power of attorney some months before, so I had no problem with that. As I went to the car to get some papers I ran into Robert who was there with his whole family. I had the presence of mind to notify him that his mother was being

taken to the emergency room before I ran into my car to go to the hospital. But I had no patience to talk to him. I simply did not want him around while Anita was being examined and I had to answer all those questions from him as well as from the doctors and nurses. I also felt that it was a problem of privacy for Anita while nurses were working on her. So, I told him that he could not go with me into the emergency room and that I would let him know when she was stabilized and resting in her hospital bed. He became very abusive and almost physical and I was fearful that I would lose my composure. I again asked him either to leave or to wait in the waiting room. He pushed me aside and walked into the emergency entrance of the hospital. I did not know what to do. I was shaking. I talked to an admission nurse and explained the situation. She immediately called security and the officer convinced Robert to back off. This was a very upsetting moment at an already difficult time. I am sure that Robert was mad at me but I had no choice.

The rest of the night was spent with Anita in the emergency room. It took hours before the doctor on duty could reach Anita's doctor. In the meantime a nurse was trying to get an IV into Anita's arm and she had such a hard time that poor Anita, who was by now unconscious, was screaming in pain. I ran out to the main nurse and insisted that she should get a nurse who knew how to give an IV. After that got taken care of things quieted down a little. I sat with Anita, holding her hand and trying to talk to her and to reassure her. I do not know what she heard. Except for her breathing there was no sign of life in her. Eventually, a doctor came in, examined her and wrote orders for her to go into the intensive care unit. I followed the ambulance and helped roll her into the room where she was hooked up to all kinds of machines. The room was completely dark except for some light which came from the center hall where the nurses were sitting. I stayed with her for most of the night. The nurses were wonderful. They redid the IV which now looked much more comfortable. She was hooked up to oxygen and several machines with monitors. Gradually color returned to her face. It was so peaceful there and the nurses were so supportive. They insisted that I should go home and rest. They also told me that the doctors started to make their rounds at six in the morning.

I still remember my feeling while driving home on the nearly empty freeway at three o'clock in the morning. It seemed hours before I arrived home even though I know that it did not take more than twenty minutes. As I drove home the thought of suicide entered my mind again. I did not think I wanted to live if Anita died. We had been together through so much, both good and bad, that I could not picture myself living without her. I did not get undressed when I got home but I did try to fall asleep. By five o'clock I was up again, had a quick breakfast and returned to the hospital. I was pleased to see that Anita was awake and looking much better. We talked a little until the doctor came in with a whole army of doctors following him. They talked and talked about the signs and the machines and what have you. I really wanted to know what was going on but they needed all kinds of tests. The rest of the day was spent shlepping to and from different rooms for X-rays, MRIs, bloodtests and a lot of paper work. They could not find anything but wanted to keep her for observation. They took her off the oxygen and within a short time she started to feel worse again. Then they called a pulmonary specialist and he saw in her MRI a faint spot on her lung: they had burnt

a hole in her lung while she had had her radiation treatments! She stayed in the hospital for a week and then she came home. Before she was dismissed we had a meeting with a nurse who explained that she would have to be on oxygen for the rest of her life and they were helpful with giving information about where to get everything and how to do it and how to fill out forms for her insurance. That was the next step down.

On the way home we stopped off for the oxygen equipment. We both felt depressed but I tried to put on a good face and tried to make Anita feel comfortable with the idea that she would, from now on, be dependent on an oxygen tank. When we arrived home I had to help her into the house. She was still too weak to walk. We already had bought electric beds so she could get up and down into bed easier. But now it was so difficult for her that she did not want to do that anymore. She wanted to sleep in the living room. We already had bought new reclining chairs which went up and down easily and gave her comfortable support. She never regained her strength to walk again. So, the next traumatic step was to get her a wheel chair. She was now so depressed that she had to get psychiatric help. I insisted that we would continue going places, so frequently I wheeled her to the car, half-carried her into the car, put the wheelchair and an extra oxygen tank in the trunk and off we went to some of our favorite places, such as Prescott, Flagstaff and Sedona where I would take everything out of the trunk and wheeled her around. Believe me, the lightweight wheelchairs are not light! Also we often went to shopping malls where I wheeled her around. But she got sicker and sicker. Once she threw up in the middle of a mall. I was not even embarrassed. I was too busy cleaning everything up. At home I did all the cooking, cleaning and whatever care she needed. I did not even think about it any more. It had become a part of my life.

During the next four months she had to go to the hospital twice more. I do not know how aware she was of what was going on. She slept now almost all the time. The last time she went to the hospital she was in a terrible state. The doctor explained to me that she was semi-comatose. When I saw her oncologist in the morning he told me that he did not expect her to get out of the hospital alive. I asked him how long he thought it would be and he said:" no more than a week." Then a miracle happened. She woke up and started talking faintly to me. She did recognize me but that was about all. She had trouble swallowing. Her doctor wanted to put a feeding tube down her throat but I remembered that, in her medical will, she had put "No tubes" and had underlined that. We had talked about it and I did not know exactly what she meant. But when the doctor mentioned a feeding tube it dawned on me that she would not want that. I immediately mentioned that to the doctor. "Well," he said, " in that case I cannot help her any more." Wow! What was I supposed to do? I read her medical wishes again and decided that this is what she wanted. It was too late to ask her anymore. She was not aware of things at that time. Then the next shock came. The doctor said that there were no more medical treatments for her so that Medicare would not allow her to stay in the hospital. She would have to go to a nursing home.

I knew how she hated nursing homes so I said that I would take care of her at home. The nurses were very nice. They told me that it would be impossible for me to take care of her and that I should arrange for Anita to go into a nursing home. I refused and insisted that she

should be released from the hospital as soon as possible. The next morning her doctor signed the release papers. Then he walked over to me and said that I should make an appointment for Anita to get another chemotherapy treatment. I was absolutely furious. First he told me that she would not leave the hospital alive and now, a dying woman, he wanted to drag her out of the house to get another treatment? I asked him if he thought how that would help her in any way. He did not answer, turned around and walked off.

I said in the beginning of this book that nearly all my life was wonderful and everything prepared me for the next step in my life. But what followed now is an exception. Nothing could have prepared me for what happened next. I did not realize that Anita was still semi-comatose. She occasionally tried to talk but mostly she slept. Besides that, while she was in the hospital her feet had cramped up so that the soles of her feet were so puffed up that she could not stand on them. So, when she had to go to the bathroom I had to wheel her in the wheelchair which was nearly impossible to maneuver through our narrow hallway and into the small bathroom. I realized that it would be very hard but I was stubborn and I managed during the day. One evening, when I left the room for just a few minutes, she tried to get out of the chair and fell. By the time I ran back into the room she was lying on the floor. She had absolutely no strength to help me so I literally had to drag her back up into her chair. I pleaded with her not to get up and to, please, call me whenever she had to go to the bathroom. The rest of the evening I tried to stay in the room as much as I could and she did call me a few times. But now it became late. I could not begin to think about going to my bed. She was sleeping in her chair in the living room and I was afraid to go to sleep. Finally, after I had taken her to the bathroom at two o'clock in the morning, I could not keep my eyes open anymore. I decided to lie on the couch, no more than two feet from her, and closed my eyes. I do not know how long I slept but here I woke up and it was still dark. She was lying on the floor between her chair and the couch. I was petrified. Again I lifted her back into the chair. She was so heavy and she could not help me. I decided to wait until daylight and then I had to get her into a nursing home.

Few things are worse than the decision to send your partner of nearly forty years into a nursing home. Several times I walked to the phone to make the call only to back off to think it over again. I knew I could not take care of her anymore. Fortunately, I had a lovely neighbor who looked in every morning to see how we were doing. She was a nurse and she had given me many good suggestions in my care for Anita. Now I called her over, her name was Betty Foster, a private nurse who took care of elderly patients in their homes. I told her what had happened. She immediately said that I had to get her into a nursing home, no ifs or buts. She also told me about Hospice and how they take care of people in the last stages of their lives so they can live and die with dignity without constant medical interference. That sounded good to me. At Betty's advice I called the doctor one more time because I needed his advice that Anita was within six months of dying. After that things went fast. A hospice nurse came over and explained what was necessary and let me sign some papers. While we were doing that an ambulance arrived already, even before I got everything together, and there she was already on her way to Chrisridge nursing home. Hospice chose this nursing home because it was nearby and it had a bed immediately available. This was the second

time that I followed an ambulance and it did not feel any better. I was sick to the stomach when I entered the nursing home and saw Anita lying there quietly in the hallway. She did not move. She was again semi-comatose.

Now a torturous time followed. After all the paperwork was taken care of, the nurse in charge told me to go home and I could return a few hours later after Anita was placed in a room. I did not want to go home but I did. When I entered the house I felt as if my whole world had collapsed. I did not know what to do. The living room was a mess from the night before so I walked up and down trying to straighten things out. After that I tried to eat something (I had not eaten since the previous evening) but I could not. I sat down but could not relax. I tried to lie down and close my eyes but that was totally impossible so I returned to the nursing home. I was glad to see that she was in her bed. She looked very relaxed and the place was bright and clean. She had a roommate who started to ask me questions but I had no patience for chit chat. So I went into the corridor to talk to a nurse and ask her what she thought about Anita's chance to survive the night. She said it did not look good but the hospice doctor had examined her and that, if she survived one day she might live on yet. I went back to the room, held Anita's hand, talked to her, told her that I loved her and, when it was time for eating, I fed her. She would not open her mouth so I asked for a little spoon and a straw and little by little, drop by drop, I got something into her mouth. So I spent that first day and many days and weeks after that. Not only did she survive but she more or less regained her consciousness, opened her eyes once in a while and tried to say a few words. The doctor and nurses kept telling me that, by all rights, she should have died that week but I kept her alive for four more months. I do not think I did her a favor and now I think that I should have let her go at that time. But at that time I could not. Not only that, I tried to give her still some beauty and variety in her limited life. I fought to get a rolling bed for her in which I could prop her up and wheel her out of the door through the hallway, into an elevator and out into the parking lot where she could look at some trees and people. It was heart- rendering and, looking back, I do not know what I was thinking. But she seemed to enjoy it. Conversation was not possible but, when I occasionally asked her if she thought it pretty or if she wanted to go back or drink some water, she would nod her head. There were no grounds around this nursing home so I could only take her to the parking lot or to a little patio. She looked awful, but I thought that she was still beautiful. Later, when I saw a picture that Robert had taken of her during the last weeks of her life, I did not even recognize her and asked Robert who that lady was. I must have been totally blind to the reality of it all.

After a few weeks I realized that the care she was receiving left a lot to be desired. I even noticed that she did not receive her pain medicine at the designated time. I spent every day there from early morning until late at night so I knew exactly what was going on. I fed her every time and helped the nurses when they had to move her. I knew that they had to enter in a book every time they gave her medicine or therapy but once I noticed that the medication was entered even though she had not received it. And, of course she was in pain. I talked it over with Betty, my neighbor, and she suggested that I should try to have her transferred to another nursing home in the neighborhood, the Beatitudes. I immediately went

there and had an interview with someone in charge. They gave me a tour of the facilities which were by far superior to what she had now and the place looked more cheerful and it had beautiful large grounds with lovely landscaping and paths for walking. But there was no bed available. I was devastated and pleaded with the supervisor to let me know when something would open up. Luckily that happened soon and within ten days I followed another ambulance to the last place in which Anita would be living.

Now, a miracle happened. After two more months, some four weeks before Anita died, she woke up out of her semi-comatose state. Her thinking was clear, so much so that she even started to play some simple card games with me. The Beatitudes was a wonderful place for her. They gave me a wheelchair which could be put back like a bed or where she could also sit up and look around. It was much easier for me to wheel her around the lovely gardens and she responded to the beauty around her. In the evening or if the weather was bad, there was a room with large windows on her floor overlooking the street where we also spent many of the hours during those last weeks. She had visitors with whom she even exchanged jokes. I did not know what was going on. Was she getting better? The doctor and the nurses informed me that there was no hope but I would not accept that. I tried now more than ever to give her food to strengthen her and after three weeks she improved! I even was able to help her walk a few steps on those swollen feet. Once she wanted to write something down. I gave her a pen and paper. It was sad to see her concentrate very hard to draw even one letter. She could not. Her hand moved the pen aimlessly around so the paper became filled with scribbles. She could only stare at the paper as I removed the pen from her hand.

She improved so much that the hospice doctor took her off from the hospice program. This was difficult because now she was again under medical care! They wanted to do all kinds of tests. I did not know whether to hope for a recovery or not. Then one day I was called in for a consultation with the psychiatrist who had interviewed Anita. He told me bluntly that Anita should have died four months earlier, that somehow I had brought her back but that there was no hope what-so-ever for a recovery. At the same time, Anita could not die unless I let her go. He told me to let her go, to tell her that it was all right for her to let go and that she should not worry about me; that I would be all right. Also he almost ordered me to stay away from her more and to let the nurses take care of her more.

It was most difficult but I listened to him. That night I told her that I would be all right and that she should not worry about me. I promised her that I would not do anything that would make her unhappy or not proud of me and to go to sleep in peace. She just stared up at the ceiling and did not respond. The next day she became quite ill. They took x-rays and the doctor said that she had pneumonia. He wanted to give her anti-biotics but then a hospice nurse came in and pleaded with me to let her die in peace, not to let her suffer any more. I gave in and she went back into the hospice program, which meant no medications except what she needed for comfort. I had to walk away from it all. This was the hardest thing for me: to go home while she was suffering.

On Saturday, January 9 1993, I went into her room early in the morning. She seemed to be

resting comfortably. I told her that I was going to the Synagogue and that I would return right after the service. I walked out and I knew that I would not see her anymore. I just knew it. I went to the synagogue and when it was time for the Kaddish, the traditional prayer commemorating the dead, I told a friend of mine: "I'll be saying this soon, too." After the service I did not even stay one minute for the traditional get-together of the congregation, the Kiddush, but I ran back to the nursing home. As I approached it I knew that Anita was not alive anymore; I felt it in the pit of my stomach. I walked down the path to the entrance where two nurses were waiting for me. Before they could say anything I said: "Don't tell me, I know." They asked me if I wanted to see her one last time but I could not. I did not want to see her dead.

Next -> CHAPTER 18: MY LIFE AS A WIDOWER AND THE HEALING PROCESS

Return to INDEX

CHAPTER 18: MY LIFE AS A WIDOWER AND THE HEALING PROCESS

I turned around and went back to the synagogue. I did not have to tell Rabbi Silberman what had happened. I am sure that my face said it all. He called me into his office and explained to me the responsibilities I had and the things I had to do. I was excused from all Shabbath obligations and spent the day making a lot of telephone calls. I also had to go to the funeral parlor because I was told that they would not bury her until all the expenses for the funeral were paid; not a pleasant activity to do on the day one's spouse died.

I am not going to dwell on some of the unhappy times there were at this most difficult moment in my life. Suffice it to say that I was all alone. I did not get any support from any of my children, so much so, that I drove myself to the cemetery on the day of the funeral. I did get a lot of support from the many friends who came to pay their last respect to Anita and I was pleased to see how many remembered her and took part in the short ceremony at the cemetery. I was in a daze throughout the proceedings and was glad that one of my friends insisted that he would drive me home. There I sat "Shiva" (time of mourning of seven days during which one sits on a low seat while people visit you). Many people came over to visit me and to bring food and give me support.

I had studied the Jewish way of mourning in the Shulchan Aruch, a kind of instruction book for our religious laws, and I decided to follow it precisely. I must say that this helped me in getting through this terribly debilitating time. Unless one went through this, one can not even imagine the emotions one goes through. But I felt at peace with the knowledge that I had done all I could for Anita while she was alive and now I wanted to do what she always wished for but which she was not able to accomplish while she was alive: to get along with everyone in the family. More than anything, I wanted to make up with Rochelle. I had no idea where to start but I knew that, given a chance, we would become close again.

And so, I started a whole new life. Slowly but surely I got myself together again. The first week was by far the hardest. All alone, with no support from my family, I had to make decisions without their input. Maybe this was for the best. I felt utterly alone but I started to put my situation into perspective. Even while sitting Shiva, I started to add the plusses and the minuses. One big plus was that I was in reasonably good health, that I had held up well under tremendous pressure and that I was financially independent and had many friends who were anxious to help me to get over this trying time. Also, I felt some relief from the constant worry and scurrying around I had been doing for the past several years. I received so much support from the synagogue which is hard to describe. Dozens of people came over to me and showed their concern and support. Towards the end of my initial week of mourning I felt I could face the world again. Earlier I had scheduled to do a book report on the Sunday, January 17th, which was after the end of my first week of mourning, only one day after the "shiva" period, and I decided to go through with it. I had worked on the book report while Anita was in the nursing home. I was ready to do it and I am sure that, if Anita could have, she would have encouraged me to go ahead with it. Also, I was teaching beginners Hebrew to an adult class at Temple Beth Israel and taught the fourth grade at the

Temple Hebrew school. I continued both after telling the classes what had happened. All this gave me much strength and courage.

Just before the end of my first week of mourning, while I was still sitting Shiva, I got a call from Naftali. It had bothered both Anita and me that Naftali and Robert had shown little interest or support for Anita and me during the last few years of her life. Also during the first week of mourning I had not heard one word of support from either one, so I was kind of surprised to hear from Naftali. After some hesitation Naftali brought up the reason for his call: He understood from what his uncle Milton had told him, that half of the money we had saved so carefully for our retirement, should go to the three children. I was perplexed. I was not prepared for this kind of talk and told him that I was still sitting Shiva and that he could wait at least until that was over before discussing such things. He apologized saying that he had not realized the time difference between Israel and Phoenix. His first week was already over. Again, I do not want to dwell on these unpleasant memories. Anyone who has lost a spouse can well imagine the toll it takes on a person to battle with lawyers and two children while mourning the loss of a wife. If they would have been successful I would have lost my financial security and I probably would have had to return to work. Also, I now realised what Anita and Milton had been talking about that night when we, on our way to Israel, we stayed for a few nights in Virginia and Anita talked till deep in the night to Milton and Sara. Fortunately, Anita and I had set up our finances to protect ourselves from such an event. But the emotional shock stayed with me for a long time. Again, Rabbi Silberman was most supportive and helpful.

You may have noticed that I mentioned the problems with two of my children and not three. I have now to go back a little to the days after the initial week of mourning. As I said, I was very distressed. I could not sleep in our bedroom and I could not open the bedroom sliding-door closets and see Anita's things there. It upset me too much. So, I made a drastic decision: I removed all her things. I did not want to sell anything, so I called the Jewish Family service and asked them to come with a truck and pick everything up. I would rather see empty closets than to be constantly reminded of the tragedy I had just gone through. The wigs, the prostheses and the jewelry, it all went out. I did not care what would happen to it. I cleaned out all the drawers but on a shelf in the closet I found her wedding dress which she had preserved for almost forty years. Somehow, I could not get myself to remove this, also. Yet, what could I do with it?

My daughter Rochelle Lynn Greenwood, Spring 1981.

Just at that time I got a call from Rochelle! I had not talked to Rochelle for many, many years. She really did not want to talk to me. She just wanted to know if she could get Anita's jewelry. I could barely answer her. I was so overcome with emotion! I told her that all was gone but that I still had the wedding dress of her mother and that I would send it to her. She still did not want to give me her address, so I suggested that I would send it to her uncle Milton and he could sent it to her. Then, I pleaded with her to let me talk to her, to let me explain to her or, when necessary, to apologize to her. I did not want to let her go again. Here was my chance to patch things up and I did not want to pass that up. I told her to challenge me, to confront me and to tell me what had made her so angry with me that she refused to talk to me for so many years. Well, it worked out beautifully, thanks to her open mind and understanding. I will always appreciate her willingness to put it all out on the table. We literally talked for hours and got all the bad feelings talked over. The following weeks we were on the phone many times and for many hours. It was like a miracle. We were both pouring out our emotions. We were crying and sometimes laughing at some of our memories. What I had hoped to do had happened: I found my daughter again, never to lose her again.

After our first conversation I was so relieved. It was as if a load had been taken off my shoulders. I had somebody I could talk to about my feelings and listen to her talking about her feelings and problems. She has helped me very much in making an adjustment to my new lifestyle.

An idea occurred to me. I had many hours of movies of our family life from 1954, when I came out of the army until the time the family broke up in 1977, plus a movie of our wedding. I decided to transfer it all on video and to make a tape for all the children so they could see that we had had many wonderful times together. It took me many weeks to edit all that film, which was mostly on individual eight mm movie reels, and to put it on a master tape. Then I transferred that and put music and a few comments in the background. It ended up on three two-hour tapes which I instantly mailed to the three children. I do not know how much the boys got out of it but Rochelle loved it and showed genuine appreciation. For me it was not only a work of love for them but it also was almost a mental cleansing for me to see our whole life in front of me during those months. I must say that since then the relationship with Rochelle and me has grown. I think we are as close as is possible. She still calls and talks for hours. It was a great surprise to her husband, John North, who had heard all those horror stories about me, to see how soon we could get so close after all these years of separation. He could not understand it. It is hard to explain. I know that I was anxious and ready for the reunion and I have a feeling that Rochelle also missed her parents in her life. In any case, it was not many months later when she invited me to her house in Thousand Oaks,

California, where we had an emotional reunion. (I always will appreciate that she was the only one who supported me when I was financially threatened by my two sons)

And so, I started my new life as a widower. I delved into my volunteer work like I had never done before. I did many tours for the museum and prepared several more programs for the docents. I did more book reviews and kept teaching the adult class and the fourth grade class. I went to Beth El every morning and night to say Kaddish for Anita and went Friday nights to Beth Israel services after which I often spent more time giving tours in the museum, and Saturday mornings I went to Beth El services. Here I was involved with four committees and became active as a Gabbai giving out the honors during the Shabbath service. Besides that, I went to Joel Gereboff's Talmud classes and went to many lectures. I did not return to Sun Sounds Radio. That brought back too many memories of Anita who had helped me so much while doing that program. I also started teaching another beginning Hebrew class for adults at Beth Israel. This was a classic case of "One-Eye being King of the blind people." I did not know much Hebrew myself but the people in my class did not know any Hebrew, so I could teach them the Hebrew alpha-bet and some of the common prayers of our service. They still thank me whenever they see me for starting them off so they can now participate in the service and follow the prayers. I continued teaching the fourth grade class at Beth Israel Hebrew school. I enjoyed teaching but not the disciplining which was involved. But I became better acquainted with Rabbi Plotkin and the new Rabbi, Rabbi Segal, and Cantor Tabaknek.

Little by little I became more anxious to see my grandchildren, both Robert's in Chandler and Naftali's in Israel. This was difficult for me because of that inheritance battle but once it was over I decided to work on that, also. With Robert it was a little easier. Robert had a step child, Sara, whom he wanted to give a Jewish education. I volunteered to pick her up (he lived then in ~~Peoria~~ Glendale) and take her to Hebrew school. Sometimes she stayed overnight with me and I would take her to the Synagogue on Saturday morning. It was as if I had a daughter again. I enjoyed it and I think that Sara also liked being with me.

During May 1993, in the fifth month of mourning, I came to the conclusion that, if I could find the right person, I would like to get married again. I did not want to stay alone. I was miserable alone at home, especially in the evenings and at night. Even though I was often invited out for dinner at several of my friends' houses, most of the time I ate alone and I did not like that at all. I was thinking of traveling again but I could not imagine traveling without somebody with whom to share my impressions. Many times, when invited by my friends, I noticed that they would invite a widow or two at the same time. I got the hint but I was not attracted to any of them. One day I asked Rabbi Silberman if he knew a lady who would be suitable for me. Without any hesitation he mentioned the name Vera Kielsky, which did not mean anything to me. I had never heard that name before. But he said that we had two things in common: we both had a European background and we both liked traveling. Also he mentioned that she was widowed at about the same time I was and that we were about the same age. But she was in Europe at the time and that I should contact her some time in September when she would return. Well, I forgot all about it.

In August I went to Israel for one month, mostly to see the grandchildren. I was totally miserable while alone in the apartment in Jerusalem. After the first night I almost decided to return home already but I am glad I changed my mind. It was a wonderful experience to get re-acquainted with the grandchildren. I spent more time than usual with them. The rest of the time I was miserable and extremely lonely. I did spend a lot of time at the marvelous Israel Museum. At that time a senior person could become a member for fifty dollars which gave one free excess to all events. Sometimes I went twice in one day, once to see one of the many exhibits and the second time in the evening for a concert. But during the rest of the time I felt utterly lonely. I must have been emotionally off-balance because many things went wrong. First I locked myself out of the apartment. I was just in my shorts and T-shirt and slippers as I was taking out the garbage. Fortunately, an English-speaking neighbor was home who told me the telephone number of a maid who cleaned the apartment and had a key. I called her from the neighbor's apartment and I got directions to her apartment. Well, to make a long story short, I asked the busdriver where to get off and he let me off two bus stops past her street! I did not have enough money on me for the extra bus ride so I had to walk a long way back which in Jerusalem involves walking up and down hills in the brutal August heat. I finally got the key and returned to my apartment hours after I had left it. I was tired and upset. But I survived that, only to get another shock a few weeks later. There was a loud knock on the door. Under normal circumstances I would never have opened the door but, in the state I was in, I opened the door after the man outside told me in perfect English that there was water leaking from the ceiling in the apartment below mine. As soon as I opened the door an Arab, dressed neatly and clean-looking, walked in. First he went to the kitchen, then to the bathroom. I followed him to keep an eye on him. Suddenly he went very fast and ran through the hallway into the bedroom, then the living room and out of the door. I could not keep up with him. When I got to the front door he was out of sight already. Then first I realized that I had been taken advantage of. I ran back and looked for my papers and money. To my great consternation my airline tickets and my passport were gone! I still do not know how he did it so fast. I was in a state of shock. This was Friday morning and the following Tuesday morning I was supposed to fly back to the States.

Now a difficult few days followed. I knew that there was an American consulate just behind the apartment building. I ran to the consulate building but was told that this was not the one for passports. I had to go to the one in East Jerusalem, in the Arab section of town but first I had to go to the police station for a report. I ran to the Russian compound (fortunately I knew all the short cuts in central Jerusalem) where I made a police report. Then I ran to the American consulate in East Jerusalem. This was much farther than I had thought and when I finally arrived there, covered with sweat and very agitated, they were just about to close for the weekend! By this time I was so upset that the consul herself (it was a lady then) came out to calm me down. She personally told me what forms to fill out and she re-assured me that I would get my passport on time. I do not remember how I got back to the apartment but I was exhausted and totally depressed and very worried. I immediately called the travel agent who fortunately had given me her home telephone number and told her to fax a copy of my ticket to the El-AI Airline office in Jerusalem. She was very helpful and gracious,

especially considering that I had completely forgotten about the time difference and that I had awakened her in the middle of the night! My Shabbat was not particularly peaceful but I made the most of it. There was nothing I could do to help things until Sunday. That is when El-Al called me that they had received the information and that they would issue me a new ticket. Of course all that involved extra expenses and I was glad that Naftali was there to lend me some money. Monday afternoon I received a call from the consul that my passport would be ready for me the following morning. I had to convince her that I needed it that Monday as I was leaving Tuesday early in the morning. I convinced her and I immediately went back to the consulate. When I arrived there was an enormous line of Arabs waiting to get in. I explained my situation to the guard but he insisted that I go to the end of the line. It was brutally hot, the hottest time of the day in August, there was no shade and the line was barely moving. It was near closing time again. Finally the guard came around and told everyone to go home. Only people who were already inside could be taken care of before closing time. In desperation I told the guard to call the consul directly and ask for her permission for me to enter to pick up my passport. At five o'clock I finally had my new passport in my hand (after forking over another sixty dollars) and I could now try to relax for a few hours until it was time for my flight back.

As I soon was to find out, my troubles were not over yet. I arrived home in Phoenix after midnight, ready to finally unwind and to get all the tensions out my mind. I opened the door to my house and promptly stepped into a pool of water: a water leak had sprung under the floor of the kitchen and half the house was under a foot of water. Can you imagine how I felt? For hours I tried to mop up the water with towels. I was going back and forth forever and there was no end to it. I lucked out that my neighbor Betty who had helped me so much while Anita was ill, saw me working as she went to empty her garbage. She told me about a service which pumps out the water for you and she thought that the insurance company would cover the expense. So, I called them and they arrived within thirty minutes with a large truck and for an hour they pumped the water out. Of course, the house was smelly and damp but they lent me two powerful fans and told me to keep those going for a week with the windows open. They also gave me good advice how to approach the insurance company so that all the work and damage would be covered. To make a long story short, the insurance paid for more than I could have hoped for. I took their recommendation of a contractor and he felt, that although the damage of our carpet was only in a small part of the house, I should replace the carpet in the whole house, plus the tile in the kitchen, the drapes in the kitchen and the living room and have the interior of the house repainted (there were water stains on the baseboards of about half of the house) and to have much of the dining room and living room furniture touched up. The total bill came to almost six thousand dollars which was completely covered by my insurance. After they were done, the interior of the house looked like brand-new. Besides that, it was just at the same time that our townhouse complex got new parking lot pavement and the exterior of our house received a new roof and a fresh coat of paint. So my whole house looked wonderful when it was all done.

After I finally settled down again I decided to start meeting some single women I knew from Beth El and also some that were introduced to me by my friends. I went out with a few but

nothing came of that. I just did not feel comfortable with them. Then, one day in November, after having given a book review, Eve Hubschman, a friend and also a recent widow (but not a prospective partner for marriage), introduced me to Vera. The name did not ring a bell and that was it. Then, about a month later, after the Saturday morning service, I was talking to Eve and Vera was there, also. We talked small talk and I mentioned that I was going to Laughlin for one night. Eve said that she would like to do that some time and I told her that I had an empty car and that, if she felt like it, she could come with me. She was delighted. Then she turned to Vera and asked her if she wanted to come along also, if I would not mind. Vera said that she would love to and Eve introduced Vera Kielsky to me again. So much had happened since I had talked to Rabbi Silberman some seven months earlier, that the name again did not even sound familiar to me. So, the following week, it was December 21 1993, we went to Laughlin. On the way out Eve sat in the front and we all three talked about superficial things. In Laughlin we had separate rooms and we had a lovely, quiet time gambling but we spent more time walking and talking. Then Eve suggested that, on the way home, Vera should sit in the front. Well, we started talking and we found out that we had so much in common, it was really unbelievable. We both had three children, two sons and one daughter. Both daughters had just had a back operation and needed to sit on an inner tube and they both were married to non-Jews by the name of John, both tall and blond young men. Neither of our daughters had children. We each had a son in Israel, who each had four children, both having three sons and then a daughter, all with similar ages. Then, we each had a son in Greater Phoenix who had just bought a new house in Chandler, both near Chandler Boulevard, one East and the other West of the freeway; they each had two children, both first a girl and then a boy, again all close in age. We also found out that our three children had much in common in their character and their habits. Then we started talking about our spouses: her husband and Anita were born in the same year and had died five days apart of the same disease and were buried five feet apart at the Beth El cemetery. Both our spouses' funerals were officiated by Rabbi Silberman, who officially was already on his way out, and not by the new Rabbi. And so it went on and on. If you would put such a story in a novel you would call it a ridiculous idea but this was real life. We had both been in Israel at the same time in August, both to see the grandchildren and both had been miserable there. We both loved to go to Israel often and would stay there for one or two months but we both did not want to move there permanently. A little later, when talking about the people we knew, we discovered that we had more than one hundred friends in common. She knew them from her activities in different women's organizations and I from my activities in committees and especially in the ritual committee and from the museum.

That could have been the end of it all. New Year Eve approached. I received several invitations to join friends with their celebrations but I still was not in the mood for celebrating. Yet, I hated the thought of spending the end of this horrendous year all by myself. Then a thought occurred to me: I knew four people, three women and one man, who were widowed about the same time as I was. I decided to invite them just for a quiet get-together, no dancing, just quiet music and noshing (munching) and a little champagne at midnight and then we would all part. One lady declined but the other three, Eve Hubschman, Vera and the gentleman Hy, whose last name escapes me, told me that it was just what they

wanted. They all felt uncomfortable going where all the rest of the people were couples and there would be drinking and music and dancing. Well, we had a wonderful evening, sometimes a little sad, especially when we reminisced about our spouses, but generally it was not morbid and everyone appreciated that they had an appropriate place to say good-bye to a very difficult year.

A week later Vera had a little reception at the first anniversary of her husband's death. She invited me and there I met some of her family and also some of our common friends. Afterwards, I helped clear the tables and stayed a little longer and talked some more with Vera. When I left, I hesitated whether I should kiss her like I did some of my female friends whom I had known for many years. I did not but I felt that I should have done it. I started to like her but I did not want to seem aggressive. After all, it was just over one year since our spouses had died. It is a very uncomfortable feeling, believe me. But it all worked out for the best.

Soon after that we went out for dinner for several times, after which I took her home and we had long talks. I seriously considered to propose marriage to her. I started to fall in love with her seriously and I made no secret about it. We decided to meet more often. We both felt very comfortable talking to each other, especially when comparing our families and backgrounds. All that time we discovered more things we had in common. On Friday evenings I asked her to go to Beth Israel with me. I still was going every Friday night to the reformed service and Saturday mornings to Beth El, to the Conservative service. Even though Vera did not care to go to services that often and so long (I like to go from the start, early in the morning), she accompanied me every week.

On the last Sunday of January I had a Beth Israel Chavura meeting and I again wanted to invite her to accompany me. I realized that my acquaintances would suspect a serious relationship. I did not feel like getting in and out of relationships so I proposed seriously to Vera. She was a little taken aback because she had not considered the prospect of remarrying. I did not want a relationship without a commitment. So, we talked about that. I also said that, if she wanted to accompany me to the chavura meeting I wanted some kind of positive response from her. I did not want to be embarrassed in front of my friends showing up with a lady friend and then telling them the next time that we had broken up. I received an encouraging answer from Vera although not a positive commitment. I took the chance and we had a wonderful time with our friends. They all liked her instantly and she was immediately excepted as one of the group. After returning to her house that evening we talked a long time and I finally got my wished-for answer. Nothing could have made me happier!

Soon after that we met regularly and frequently. We started talking about our wedding plans. We were in total agreement that it should be a traditional Jewish wedding, a celebration of a new life without any undue merry-making. We both belonged to Beth El, so that was our synagogue of choice. Also, most of our common friends belonged to Beth El. Neither of us liked the new Rabbi very much, so we asked the retired Rabbi Silberman to officiate. Then it

occurred to me, that I would like Rabbi Plotkin of Beth Israel, who had liked Anita so much and who also got to know Vera very well because we talked a lot after the Friday night services, to participate in the ceremony. First I asked Rabbi Silberman's permission. He said that he did not object to that at all and that he would welcome Rabbi Plotkin on the bima and to let him be a part of the ceremony. Then I called Rabbi Plotkin and told him that I would be very honored if he would participate in the ceremony of our wedding. He accepted so graciously. I knew that with these two wonderful Rabbis and human beings it would be a very special wedding. To top it all, I also asked cantor Tabaknek, who was and still is today the cantor of Beth Israel. He has a beautiful voice and a large repertoire of melodies for the different prayers in the service. He also accepted graciously. We were thrilled. We knew that this would be a very memorable wedding which not only we but also our friends would always remember.

The following weeks we ran around like crazy to get the caterers lined up, the invitations printed, addressed, mailed and to do a thousand and one things necessary for a successful event. And that was what it ended up to be. At the very last moment we remembered to get a pianist, one of my acquaintances, for the musical part of the service and the dinner. Everything went as planned. It was a totally successful evening. We did not want any dancing; we were not ready for that. But how would we indicate the end of the evening? Could we just walk out and wave good-bye to everyone? Then Vera came up with a brilliant idea: we asked the pianist to play "Hatikva," the Israeli national hymn, at the end of the evening. Everybody would know what that meant.

It was time for our wedding and now I could enjoy it fully and without any worries. Everything went as we had planned. Before the service, in the bridal lounge, I did Vera's hair with a curling iron. We had tried a hairdresser the week before but he made such a mess out of her hair that I decided to do it myself. My experience came in handy! After that Robert, Mike (Vera's younger son) and Dorit, a cousin of Vera's who by chance was visiting Vera at that time, took a lot of pictures, both still pictures and videos. I treasure these very much and look at them frequently. I led the mincha-maariv (afternoon and evening) service. After a short break the ceremony started. First we went to the back room where the Ketuba (wedding contract) was signed. One of the witnesses was Rochelle. What a thrill! It brought tears to my eyes to have my daughter be part of the wedding ceremony. Another witness was one of our common friends. After that the actual wedding ritual started. Vera looked like a movie star. All heads turned when she walked to the front of the bima (stage) to accompany me under the Chupa (wedding canopy).The pianist played soft music in the background and accompanied cantor Tabaknek during his moving rendition of the "Seven Blessings." Both Rabbis made wonderful speeches, especially Rabbi Plotkin who had known Anita so well. His speech was especially sensitive. At the end I had to break the glass which reminds us of the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem, so that even during such a happy event we have to remember our history which is full of turmoil. The official ceremony was finished. We went to the hall in the back of the sanctuary where the tables were set beautifully for the sit-down dinner. I was overwhelmed by the beauty of the setting. The caterers had done an excellent job. During the dinner we walked around to each table and thanked everybody

personally for coming to our wedding. The dinner was served punctually. It was well prepared and well served. I had tears in my eyes during the whole ceremony. We had one hundred and twenty people at the wedding, ninety-five percent of these were friends we had in common. So, it became the event of the month. Everyone mentioned to us how proper and meaningful the ceremony had been and what a thrill it was to have a positive event for people at our age. Which was true, considering that we had all met for funerals many times during the previous year. The greatest thrill for me was that, besides Robert and his family, Rochelle with her husband John, was there to share in this simcha (joyous event). It was a little over a year since we were re-united. In no way can I describe my emotion to have her sitting next to me at the main table during the dinner after the service. She loves Vera and she was genuinely happy for me which gave me a great moral support during this emotional time.

At the same time we were busy selling our respective homes and looking for a house to move into. We both felt that we did not want to start our new lives in the house where we had lived with our previous spouses. Vera was lucky: she sold her house within a few days. Her house was only one and a half years old and was therefore easier to sell. We were also lucky that we found a house we both liked and within the price range in which we were looking and within the area we wanted to move. Everything happened in the proper time so that we could move out of Vera's house and into our new house shortly before the wedding day. The problem was that I would not have the money for the house until after I sold my house. And now I was lucky. I mentioned before how all throughout my life things happened which prepared me for the next step in my life. Well, here is another example.

As I told you before, my house was completely repainted inside and outside, recarpeted and with new drapes and a new tile floor in the kitchen. It also had a new roof and the parking lot had been repaved recently. It showed beautifully to prospective buyers and I was able to sell this twenty-two year old townhouse within three months for the price I wanted, just in time to pay for our new house. As a matter of fact, I received the payment for my house on the same day we had to pay for our house. It was just like a miracle.

Next -> CHAPTER 19: A NEW LIFE

Return to INDEX

CHAPTER 19: A NEW LIFE

And so I started a whole new life again with a new wife, a new house and a new life style. Anita and I had always traveled a lot and the same was true of Vera and her previous husband. Now it seemed we were doubling the amount of travel we were going to do. We immediately made plans for a trip to Israel for the Bar Mitzva of Vera's oldest grandson. We combined it with travel through Europe where both Vera and I have family. It was delightful. I met nearly all her very extensive family (she is one of twelve cousins!) and she met mine. In Israel we each got acquainted with each other's family. It was all very exciting and also very confusing but it was wonderful, especially for me, to finally have a large family, for the first time since the Holocaust. When we returned home we started planning for future trips. We both wanted to see as much of the world as we could manage. The only way this was possible was by making a yearly travel plan. We planned our trips for the following five years, put each year's plan on a piece of note paper and hung the five notes on our refrigerator door.

I do not want to go into all the details of our journeys. Suffice it to know that we made first a five-year plan of travels. As I am writing this, we have almost completed these five years and we have stuck nearly completely to our schedule. Now we have already added two more years to our travel plans. Our life has been very exciting and busy. We have a very active social life. It seems that there are never enough hours in a day. We also are very happy and have grown very close. We both went through similar, traumatic experiences and now we want to enjoy life to the fullest. We work very hard at achieving that goal and pray that we will have many more years of good health and strength and that we will continue to have the love and support of our children.

Next -> EPILOGUE

Return to INDEX

EPILOGUE

The hardest part of this writing was how and when to end it. My life is an on-going story but I find it difficult to keep writing about our current activities because I cannot see a trend or a historic line in it. It was much easier to look back at my earlier life and to see how beautifully one part of my life fitted into the next, how seemingly unreasonable suffering ended up giving me the strength and insight for later events. I hope that this showed on these pages. My main purpose was to share my experiences with my family and with anyone who cares to read it. Above all I wanted to show that my life was not dominated by the two great tragedies of my youth, the death of my father and the Holocaust, which stole my youth from me, and later the third tragedy, the loss of Anita, my wife of nearly forty years, but that mostly my life was a happy one and full of blessings. I still wonder quite often about what kind of a person I might have been without these upheavals but I am not unhappy with the person I became. I hope that my children, who in their youth never really had the chance to know the real "me," understand me better after reading these pages. If I accomplished that then I have achieved my goal I set after Anita died.

I also would like to have inspired my children and grandchildren not to despair when things seem hopeless but to work themselves up out of the quagmire and start anew, to set their goals high but not so high that they are beyond their reach and to keep working towards those goals until they are achieved and then to plan for new goals. ~~Even~~ dreams can come true.

In conclusion I want them to know that I am grateful to G'd for all my blessings. It took me many years to come to terms with Him and I must thank Naftali and his in-laws and circle of friends who inspired me to start studying Judaism. After years of learning and being simply "curious" I now feel comfortable with my belief. I have still much to learn and I have a long way to go until I reach my final "goal."

I want to thank Robert for staying in touch with me even during the most trying times. I also thank him and Naftali for giving me grandchildren which lends a whole new dimension to my life and which inspired me to return to the more traditional way of Jewish life. And I am especially grateful to Rochelle for giving me another chance and giving me the love and trust of a daughter.

And finally, my endless thanks to Vera who gave me a whole new life with joys and pleasures I could barely have hoped for. I pray that we will stay close and happy together and have many exciting adventures so that, some day, I will add some more chapters to my life story.

If I may leave a legacy to my children it is the following: that from my life they may learn the importance of a positive outlook on life; to be grateful for all the good things in life; to realize that when things are bad they will get better again and to learn from the bad times so you can apply that experience in ~~good~~ times; to look at the good side of people and to forgive the people for their bad deeds; to change things you do not like and, if you cannot

change them, to make an adjustment and accept your fate; above all, to have confidence in yourself and hope for the future.

Return to INDEX